

THIS CHURCH OF OURS

*The Episcopal Church
What It Is and
What It Teaches About Living*

Edited by
Howard A. Johnson

Foreword by
The Rt. Rev. Horace W. B. Donegan

Stephen F. Bayne, Jr.
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Albert T. Mollegen
Lawrence Rose
Carroll E. Simcox
Theodore O. Wedel

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AND WHAT IT TEACHES ABOUT LIVING

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HOWARD A. JOHNSON

with a Foreword by the Bishop of New York

This series of lively discussions covers such vital topics as Our Freedom, Our Heritage, Our Law and Liberty, Our Personal and Parish Life, Our Life in the Community, Nation and World, and Our Reason for Being — by outstanding theologians and teachers of the Episcopal Church. It is a volume that can be used profitably with both *The Episcopal Church and Its Work* and *Christian Living*.

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OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**

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AND WHAT IT TEACHES ABOUT LIVING

by

STEPHEN F. BAYNE, JR.

J. V. LANGMEAD CASSERLEY

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THEODORE O. WEDEL

HOWARD A. JOHNSON, EDITOR

FOREWORD BY

THE BISHOP OF NEW YORK



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Foreword

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Anglicanism has been defined as more a basic loyalty than the acceptance of a fixed doctrinal position. This book illustrates the point both with brilliance and with penetration.

The expanding loyalties which are the inevitable result of an increasingly appropriated Faith constitute the drive behind the true Episcopalian's ideals and aims in life. Maintaining a determined loyalty to his own form of worship, and an almost excessively exalted concept of the Episcopate, he still cannot rest unless he is on appreciative terms with his non-episcopal neighbors. Trusting in the power of truth and beauty to commend themselves, he still is not at ease until the land in which he lives has first-class universities and schools. Sometimes accused of worldliness because of his willingness to meet the world where it is, he will, at the same time, maintain an exalted view of the world as it ought to be. Deeply conscious of history and fully aware of the world's tragedy, he still will pray daily for "peace in our time." Instinctively opposed to coercion and censorship, he dislikes equally the faintest suggestion of a lack of discipline. Hypersensitive about the slightest suspicion of senti-

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mentality, he will still find a surge of emotion within himself when "O God, our help in ages past" is sung on either a joyous or a tragic occasion.

He is, in many ways, a confusing and paradoxical personality, but to do without him means to abandon the Shakespeares, the Washingtons, the Wilberforces, the Phillips Brooks, the Roosevelts, the Temples, the Halifaxes and the Churchills of this world. If the loss of such people seems too great a price to pay, then this book will serve to help the average man to understand him. Indeed, it will help the ordinary Episcopalian to understand himself.

I am grateful to the men who made this book possible.

HORACE W. B. DONEGAN
Bishop of New York

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This Church of Ours



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH:
WHAT IT IS
AND
WHAT IT TEACHES ABOUT LIVING

POWEL MILLS DAWLEY:

Our Heritage ❧ 1.

The well-instructed Episcopalian, keenly observant of the Ecumenical Movement and concerned to promote Church Unity by prayer and in practice, is thankful to find that he has Brothers in Christ everywhere—the greater number of whom, it turns out, are *not* Anglicans but bear some other denominational label. It is, accordingly, a source of great distress to him that there is not a clearly manifest outward sign of the inner unity in Christ of which we are sensible.

On the other hand, this same Episcopalian is intensely—even stubbornly—loyal to the particular Christian tradition which has nourished him and has made of him a type of human being who is found in history only where the Anglican Heritage has been received and is appropriated.

The nature of this heritage, the special kind of Christian it produces, the particular cultus, ethos, and ethic which are its hallmarks, its loyalty to itself and its longing for Church Unity—these are themes sounded in this first chapter, which is an overture to the entire book—EDITOR

The Reverend Powel Mills Dawley, Ph.D., S.T.D., is Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Sub-Dean of The General Theological Seminary. He is co-author of *The Religion of the Prayer Book* and editor of the *Report of the Anglican Congress: 1954*. In addition to such books as *The Reformation*, *The Words of Life*, and *John Whitgift and the English Reformation*, Professor Dawley has written two of the volumes constituting The Church's Teaching series. These are *Chapters in Church History* and *The Episcopal Church and Its Work*. The latter volume was "required reading" for the School of Worship held in The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in 1956, a School which was addressed by Professor Dawley and by three other eminent divines—Chaplain Krumm, Dr. Simcox, and Canon Wedel—whose lectures at that School are preserved in this present book.

Our Heritage

Some years ago it was thought that, however difficult the reunion of divided Christendom might be, at least the way to try to achieve that goal was clear. The problem was to put together once more the fragments into which the Church of Christ was divided. Reunion was viewed as a kind of jig-saw puzzle ecumenical activity. Each piece was supposed to fit somewhere, and not until the whole had been reassembled would we lay hold upon the full measure of Christian corporate life.

Now there is a sense in which unity—the oneness of the Church—is essential to the fullness of its life. Indeed, that truth is the mainspring of all ecumenical efforts. But we see today that the task is harder than simply seeking to fit together the fragments of divided Christendom. They do not, in fact, slip into place like pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. Each separated part has come to have a life of its own, distinct from many others. Each embodies, for the men and women whose spiritual loyalty it claims, a way of response to the Gospel itself. Each is supported by a tradition, a heritage of faith and worship, of authority and institutional life, hallowed by the centuries of devotion it has evoked, a heritage which surrounds and supports the Christian allegiance of those whom it bears within its continuing life. Romanism, for example, the great Latin tradition of the West, is the heritage of millions of Christians; Orthodoxy, the separate Catholic tradition of Eastern Christendom, is similarly the support and way of response for still other

millions. Close at hand in our own communities we see the several traditions of Protestant Christianity embodied in Methodism, Lutheranism, Presbyterianism and others.

We, too, in the Episcopal Church are sustained by our own distinct and separate Christian tradition. We call it "Anglicanism," a term that witnesses to our historic link with the life of the Church of England. The word "Anglican" describes those Churches that derived from the Church of England and its expansion overseas, and which share in the common traditions of faith, worship and church order distinctively theirs. The Anglican tradition is that Christian tradition which became the ethos of the Church of England and spread thence to become the distinguishing mark and spirituality of a far-flung, world-wide Communion, today claiming the allegiance of its millions across the continents. This is our tradition, once brought to the American shores by the Church of England in the colonies, and now naturalized and perpetuated in the American scene in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

What is the character of this Anglican heritage of ours? What kind of tradition is it? There are numerous ways in which an answer to that question may be framed—indeed, there is more than one answer—but let us begin with the ordinary Episcopalian. What often characterizes his ecclesiastical and religious outlook? Is it not frequently a kind of religious conservatism? He is content with old, accustomed ways. He likes things in church as they always have been. On one level this may be a sign of the wrong kind of conservatism, but on another level it springs from something profoundly true of the Episcopalian: he belongs to a spiritual tradition which clings stubbornly to its continuity with the past. Anglicanism brings us a heritage

of continuity; it binds men to the life of the Church in all the ages.

Now continuity does not necessarily mean the perpetuation of every spiritual orientation and practice, every past custom and popular belief, without change or modification. It may mean rather that kind of continuity in which the Church has an identity with its own life in the past, an identity that rests on the preservation through the ages of all that is essential to the proclamation of the Gospel and men's response to it in the faith, life and worship of the Christian community. For example, few things strike us more forcibly when we study the Reformation experience of the Church of England as a whole than this element of continuity with the past. Few things make a sharper contrast with the events of the Reformation elsewhere in Europe than the unique course of Anglicanism in this respect. The English Reformation was accomplished in a century and more of controversy and change, during which the Church was caught up in the political ambitions of monarchs, its resources made the object of avaricious attacks by the ruling class, its life and practices often affected by passions that had little to do with the Christian Gospel. All this was perhaps inescapable in a day when it was thought that religious loyalty and political allegiance were inseparable, when men could not conceive a state in which citizen and churchman were not interchangeable names for the same national membership.

England in the sixteenth century separated itself from the Papal and Roman tradition in Western Christianity, and made its Church that of the English nation. England, too, separated itself in the end from the doctrinal and ecclesiastical revolutions on the continent of Europe that

resulted in the formation of Protestant traditions in the West. But nowhere did Englishmen in their church life and institutions, their formularies, or their experience in worship, separate themselves from the central elements of that Christian heritage which had been theirs for more than a thousand years. Here is the hard core of continuity.

There was change, and sometimes and in some areas drastic change. Elements once obscured—for example, the central place of the Scriptures, anchoring Christian belief and orienting Christian devotion to the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ—were now brought into sharper focus; elements that had been subject to superstitious corruption in the popular piety of the late middle ages—for example, the meaning and place of the Eucharist in the Christian life—were now linked in clearer definition to the life and thought of the ancient, undivided Church of the Fathers. Here and there horizons of spirituality were narrowed in the passions of controversy; some of the enrichments of devotion were temporarily lost. Yet new insights were brought to men in the renaissance of patristic learning, in the recovery of the Scriptures, in the renewed exploration of the meaning of ancient Christian beliefs. But nowhere was the Englishman conscious of a discontinuity, of a break with the essentials his Christian heritage had brought him through the past. He retained the ancient threefold ministry, the episcopate and priesthood of the Church's order; he worshipped in the same parish churches in whose yards his forefathers lay buried—and he did so with the same services of worship, now revised, simplified and given to him in his own language in the Book of Common Prayer, which linked him to the Church's liturgical life in all the ages past. The institutional life of his Church remained unchanged—

regrettably so, perhaps, in so far as some of its glaring inequities and abuses were concerned—and this institution still shaped and molded its members to patterns long since formed in its life.

Significantly enough, in the controversy that raged in Elizabethan England, it was precisely this continuity of the Church of England with its own past that the Roman Catholic opponent of Anglicanism denied. This was the point of his attack upon the Church of England from outside. Yet it was also just this continuity of the Church of England with its own past that the sixteenth-century Puritan resented. This was his point of attack upon the Church of England from within. There is a sense in which both Puritan and Papist were at least partially right. The continuity which the Puritan disliked was there, but with it had been merged something new which to the Romanist seemed to destroy the very continuity itself. A remark made by a contemporary continental Protestant reformer gives us a key to this paradox. His language is scarcely precise, but his meaning is abundantly clear. When he saw the settlement of religious controversy in the English Church taking shape—to him an unhappy shape—in the policy of Queen Elizabeth I, Rudolph Gualter warned Englishmen against “a form of religion which is an unhappy compound of popery and the Gospel.” What Gualter perceived he could call only “an unhappy compound”; we call it that precious synthesis of the Anglican tradition—a synthesis between the Christian elements in the whole Renaissance awakening of the sixteenth century and the truth as it had been preserved and transmitted through the medieval Catholic order England had known for centuries.

It is this synthesis, this conjunction of things that men

sometimes call by the names "Catholic" and "Evangelical," that is the unique characteristic of our Anglican tradition. On one hand, Anglicanism in its continuity with the past affirms the authority of history, the claim of tradition; on the other, it embraces the authority of the living voice of spiritual experience and insight in the Church in every age. Both are essential to an apprehension of the fullness of the truth of God. Each is necessary to the preservation of the true freedoms of the Christian community—freedom on one side from the straits of rigid antiquarianism, freedom on the other from easy and facile answers to the problems of Christian faith and life in which we may lose touch with the truth as it has been revealed and by which men have lived for generations.

This synthesis contains some profound tensions and difficulties, not the least of which is the responsibility of its maintenance. Where is it rooted in Anglicanism? Where do its claims ask our response? Some answer to these questions will enable us better to appropriate this same synthesis within our own spiritual experience, in our day by day response to the challenges of the tradition that supports us. People will answer these questions in different ways, from different points of beginning. That in itself testifies to the diversity within the unity of Anglicanism. But any answer which is to be satisfactory will undoubtedly touch, in one way or another, upon two elements of our heritage: faith and worship.

Consider for a moment the Anglican heritage of faith that has come to us in the Episcopal Church. The Anglican tradition is a credal tradition. Uniquely in the sixteenth century the Church of England resisted the narrow confines of the new confessional dogma to which men turned in

their Reformation zeal. Everywhere outside England the Reformation was a creed-making era in which conformity was demanded to new doctrinal standards and definitions of Christian belief. Lutheranism proclaimed its doctrines in the Augsburg Confession; adherence to it was the test of Lutheran allegiance. Calvinism curtailed the theological liberty of its adherents by the precise and straitening clauses of its Confessions—Swiss, Scottish and Westminster. Even Roman Catholicism framed a test of Catholic belief in the rigid doctrinal articles of the Council of Trent and the so-called “Creed of Pius IV.” But while contemporary controversy everywhere hardened in these protective confessions, Anglicanism preserved its continuity with the freedom of past ages. The Church of England appealed to the truths of Holy Scripture, not as momentarily cast anew in Reformation forms of doctrine, but as enshrined in the ancient creeds of undivided Christendom, as taught in the writings of those whom the Elizabethan canons called “the Catholic fathers and ancient Bishops.”

Our theological orientation is to the credal faith of Christendom, to the Apostolic Tradition embodied in the Scripture and affirmed in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds. This is what spares us the domination of particular theological systems, the confining limits of narrow confessional orthodoxy. This is what brings us a freedom in which the Anglican synthesis is possible. Such freedom is not a kind of unrestricted license to believe what we choose, nor an irresponsible indifference to the faith, as it used to be put, “once and for all delivered to the saints.” The essential element in any liberty, spiritual or otherwise, is responsibility. If the absence of a rigid dogmatic system makes us the heirs of the wealth of free and earnest human inquiry

and endows us with the precious gift of a liberal temper of mind, it none the less charges us with greater responsibility to the central truths of our credal faith. If it allows us to perceive new dimensions of Christian truth in the living spiritual experience of each generation of Christians, it does so because those dimensions are a measure of the central affirmations of the Apostolic Tradition itself.

If our synthesis finds itself rooted in a way of faith, it is equally inseparable from our way of worship. Sometimes it is a salutary exercise to remove the reading glasses of minute historical research and stand looking back over four centuries of Anglican history with a far-sighted eye. When all is said and done, what were the unique elements of the Anglican Reformation? What has lived in the Anglican tradition down through the centuries ever since? Surely this credal tradition of faith of which we have been speaking. But what else? The authority of the English monarchs in the affairs of the Church comes to mind—the Royal Supremacy—that guiding power exercised by the Crown in the course of the English Reformation from the days of Henry VIII down into the seventeenth century. But Royal Supremacy has vanished now, its remnant only an anachronistic survival in one Church of the world-wide Anglican Communion. What else remains to stand alongside our credal tradition of faith as distinctively Anglican? Simply the Book of Common Prayer.

Here is the Anglican synthesis embodied in a way of worship. The Prayer Book is our title-deed to a heritage of Catholic spirituality, while it is grounded upon and extends into our lives the Evangel itself—the mighty acts of God for us and for our salvation as the Scriptures know them. The liturgical life of our Church brings us perhaps our

most intimate point of contact with the ages that are past, yet at the same time it is a living way of worship that takes an impress from the spiritual experience of each passing generation. The Prayer Book changes, and will continue to change. Its language varies in succeeding centuries, its services are continuously enriched, its forms are ever widened to seek to embrace the totality of men's lives as children of God. Yet the Prayer Book witnesses on every page to one unchanging truth: God's redemptive activity is the way of Incarnation; man's response is a way of life in the grace of Jesus Christ our Saviour. This is the heart of the Gospel and the constant proclamation of our tradition of worship.

Such, then, is one possible answer to our question about the Anglican tradition, the heritage that has come to us. What claims and supports us in the Episcopal Church is continuity with the past in faith and in spiritual experience, but a continuity constantly enriched by the deeper apprehension of God's truth continually given to men by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian community. In this Christian tradition the witness of Scripture, the authority of history, and the claim of contemporary experience in the Christian community all come together in the Incarnate Lord to whom each of these elements brings us. There is a sense in which this tradition is not peculiarly "Anglican"—it is, rather, catholic, universal, ecumenical. However haltingly and imperfectly we have responded to its claims, history has brought it to us, charging us with the responsibility of its maintenance and extension, both in the world around us and in the character of our own Christian commitment.

STEPHEN F. BAYNE, JR.:

Our Freedom ☞

2.

Freedom is not the peculiar mark nor the monopolistic possession of Episcopalians. It is, rather, the privilege and problem of every human being.

But since in this book we purpose to deal with "The Episcopalian and Ethics," we cannot avoid a study of the phenomenon of freedom—that is, we have to reckon with the problem of choice and come to terms with the unavoidability of making decisions. For without freedom, there can be no ethics. And without ethics, it wouldn't matter very much whether one were an Episcopalian—or anything else!

—EDITOR

The Right Reverend Stephen Fielding Bayne, Jr., S.T.D., is The Bishop of Olympia. His Paddock Lectures, published in 1953, under the title of *The Optional God*, are justly famous. Fresh from his pen is the Harper Book for Lent 1958, entitled *In the Sight of the Lord*. This former Chaplain of Columbia University is the author of *Christian Living* (Volume V of The Church's Teaching) which served as the basic text for the School of Worship held in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in 1957. Preserved in this present book is the lecture wherewith Bishop Bayne launched that School, together with the lectures of Dean Rose, Professor Casserley, and Professor Mollegen; each of them dealing with some aspect of the subject, "The Episcopalian and Ethics."

Freedom and the Free Man

Perhaps the easiest way to begin is by asking two questions. First, why do we speak of the Christian as a free man? Second, why do we speak of Christ as *the* free Man?

The principal reason for our asking these two questions is that the experience of freedom is beyond doubt the deepest experience man ever has of himself. Both duty and conscience are tremendously important realities to us. But neither duty nor conscience would be possible or have any meaning, if underlying them there were not the fact of human choice and responsibility.

Actually, it would be hard to come closer to the heart of humanity than we do when examining the terms of freedom. The whole perplexing, mysterious, harassing business of being human is all tied up with the fact of our freedom—of the inescapable obligation with which we are created, the obligation to choose. Man is *the* choosing animal—that is the simplest way to say it.

As we grow into the stage of memory, our earliest recollections of childhood are memories of choice. They are memories of things which we wanted to get, and did or didn't get. They are memories of things that were right and wrong for us; of duties which we must learn and fulfil; of relationships between persons which must be chosen; of praise and blame for choices wise or foolish.

As we grow older, the very stages of our growth are measured in terms of our freedom and responsibility. We expect more from a boy of ten than we do from a boy of

five; we expect infinitely more of a man of fifty than we do of a boy of ten. And the "more" in each case is a measure of the responsible freedom that we take for granted about him and about ourselves.

The kind of men and women we become is determined by the things that we choose. Even after we allow all that ought to be allowed for the influence of luck and environment and accident, there is left a hard core of responsible freedom. This is no theory; this is the way life is. Men and women must choose what kind of people they are going to be and what kind of life they are going to live. And it is one of the deepest human intentions that we are accountable for this use of our freedom.

A caution, however, is in order here. In Christian eyes at least, this freedom of which we speak is not a theoretical or speculative matter. Christianity doesn't begin with a theory about freedom. Christianity begins with the *fact* of freedom. And the fact raises all kinds of intellectual problems, to which Christianity does not pretend to have easy answers.

There is a problem as to the extent of our freedom: How free are we in fact? We recognize great limitations on freedom: limitations of ignorance, of time and space, and of our own confused and divided wills. In these areas Christianity, let it be said, has no easy theoretical answers.

Nor do we have any easy answer to the question of the relationship of our freedom to the providence and power of God. Are we really as free as we think? Does God really limit himself, as he seems to do, in letting us choose to do harm or to disbelieve? How can we reconcile this freedom in the universe with the one great God whose will must be supreme if he is God at all?

Here again I think that Christianity has no easy answer

to propose. We are not a very speculative people. We are content to start with the fact that this is the way God made us—animals who must choose and whose life is going to be the record of their responsible choices. To come to terms with this fact and to work out some way of living with it is the basic problem of Christian living.

This is really a very humble way to get at the problems of ethics. It would probably be a lot more satisfying to our egos if we could begin with some full-blown philosophical system in which we and our problems could all be fitted into neat categories. But in fact life doesn't seem to be that neat; and we are, perforce, content to start where life puts us.

But we don't necessarily stop there. This perplexing freedom—this persistent obligation to choose, this inability of man to get along without making choices (for not to choose is itself a choice)—suggests at least two great possibilities. The first of these is that there is a real and sometimes quite heroic dignity attached to being human: the dignity that arises from the person who accepts the choices that come, makes them with as much grace and gentleness and love as possible, and offers them with all their imperfections to the best that he knows. If we knew all the answers—if our life could be lived on a base of carefully calculated rewards and punishments, rights and wrongs—that life would be a very different thing from what it is. At the heart of all life, there is a necessity for the free offering of one's self, for the commitment of one's self to what one believes in. And to the man or woman who chooses the best and truest, and stakes everything on that belief, there is given a measure of dignity and stature which seems to come solely in that way. This is the one great possibility.

The other possibility is the even greater one of what

God's purposes might be in all this. If he created us, if our freedom is his gift, what does he seek in giving it to us? And here there comes into our minds a very great surmise, a surmise foreshadowed by our Lord when he said to us, *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends* (John 15:15). If it is true that what God seeks in endowing us with freedom is that we shall then freely respond to him as friend to friend rather than merely obey him because we are afraid not to—if the end toward which God is working is a community of freely loving and sharing personalities—then there is opened to us a possibility so great and glorious as to be almost beyond human belief.

But these are surmises, guesses, possibilities; and mankind must first wrestle with more sober problems and thoughts. Our first thought about freedom is that we have it. We look sometimes with the greatest envy at the other animals. We envy them their unselfconsciousness. We envy them their irresponsibility. We wish with all our hearts that somehow we could drift through life without having to choose. We wish that our instincts and impulses would be as sure a guide to us as they are to a dog or a horse. But we do not live very long before we discover how impossible this is. Our instincts, our hungers and our drives, don't really guide us anywhere—they furnish the raw material out of which our choices are made; and that is all they do. No matter how hungry a man may be, he still must decide how he will meet that hunger and fulfil it. His instincts don't help him here; he must himself decide how he will meet the need.

More often than not, the second thoughts we have are somewhat bitter and resentful ones. For one thing, we look at the responsibilities, the choices, which life forces on us, and we say, "By what right does life require this choice of me? I don't know enough to make it wisely. My freedom is a very limited thing. I am hemmed in at every point by ignorances and prejudices which make it impossible for me to solve this problem the way it should be solved. More than that, even the problem is not the one I want to solve—the choice that comes to me is not in the form that it ought to be. I can only make the choices which come to me, and they are choices which in large part are determined by what other people have chosen long ago. I am given a lot of left-overs to choose from without being able to start fresh as any real freedom would imply."

This is certainly a valid objection. One of the first things we ought to learn about freedom is how limited it is. For the sake of our own consciences we ought to learn that there are many things we cannot decide and many choices which must be left with only partial solutions. One of the problems of responsible people is the problem of the perennially bad conscience. Because we are perfectionists by nature and because we think that we ought to be able to make perfect choices, we go around with a hang-dog air because our choices aren't that good.

We need even more to apply this caution to our thoughts about other people. All too often we catch ourselves assuming more responsibility in others than we would be willing to accept ourselves—acting toward others as if they were perfectly free when we would not dream of asserting that perfect freedom about ourselves. Humility and charity both belong with freedom.

The limitations on our freedom are infuriating, and there comes a stage in every person's life when he must wrestle with those exasperating limitations and come to terms with them. But how does the Christian come to terms with these limitations on his freedom and, even more, with the exasperating fact of the freedom itself?

From the beginning of history there have been three general human ways of coping with these problems. The first is the way of rejection. A man might say, "I have this consciousness of freedom—I *feel* free—yet I know that this is only a delusion. If there is a God, then I know that my freedom can't be real because a God must be omnipotent; or, likely, there isn't any God and this awareness of freedom that I have is only self-deceit. It is only a way I secretly compensate myself for being a mortal creature. It doesn't have any real meaning at all; it doesn't correspond to the predetermined reality of the universe in which I live; it is a cheat and a snare and I will have nothing to do with it."

Sometimes this rejection can be a very dramatic gesture. It is a rather popular mood, for example, among some young people who "look back in anger, look forward in despair, and look around them in disgust," as a current play written by one of them expresses it. It is the point of view of some who call themselves existentialists—who say in effect that life doesn't make any sense and freedom is meaningless; that therefore the only thing a man can do is to fly his freedom like a meaningless banner, knowing that it doesn't make any sense and doesn't go anywhere.

More often this rejection of freedom is far less dramatic. For most people it takes the form merely of a deadly cynicism about the whole enterprise of human life. It has

no meaning; it is simply a case of dog eat dog, of every man for himself, of every man having his price. If you want, you can wrap up these four little maxims in a very convenient, and pretty selfish, philosophy of life. Many do. Basically it is not a very satisfying life for most of them. It is bounded by death, by money and by health so arbitrarily that there isn't very much room for a big human soul or a big human experience inside it. But for what it is worth, it passes for a way of coping with the problem of freedom.

A far more general way of coming to terms with these problems is the way of conventionality. In this case a person will say, "Well, I suppose I believe in God—everybody does—and therefore I suppose my responsible freedom is in some way a gift from him. I wish I didn't have it, for it is not very safe and requires me to make uncomfortable decisions and to take uncomfortable stands that I really don't want to take. Therefore, prudence and safety alike dictate that I shall use my freedom as little as possible. I will avail myself of the decisions of other people as much as I can. Conventional morality, the morality of the majority, is adequate for most purposes, and I will make it do for myself. I will risk as little as possible; I will dare as little as possible; and I will let myself care about as little as possible. In this way I will avoid getting hurt, avoid danger. If God wants me to be a heroic, loving, believing, hoping, saintly person, let *him* make me that. I am not very much myself, and I know it. So I will take the safer way."

This is the most common solution that humanity finds. There are some things to be said for it. There is no virtue *per se* in being a rebel or a non-conformist, and it is quite likely that the decisions of the majority of people are on the whole reliable decisions, particularly in the less important

areas. More than that, there is something to be said for a man or a woman being willing to identify himself with society as a whole, to make common cause with it, and not to set himself apart from the common lot.

But from the point of view of the Gospel, conformity is a dangerous middle course. In the first place, it is not true that we are small and unimportant individuals. Christ's whole way of dealing with people is to lead them to see the supreme and climactic importance of their own personal relationship with God. God has given to each living human being the most priceless gift of all: the gift of life, and with it the privilege of knowing and loving and serving God. This is no ordinary gift to be scorned or to be feared.

In the second place, man's growth in moral insight has not come by counting noses. In the choices of right and wrong, better and worse, we need not be surprised if much of the time the majority is wrong. At least, it is wrong in the sense of choosing always the safer path. Man's moral history has more often been the record of great forward steps, great insights, shared by only the few willing to plunge ahead who, in so doing, opened the way along which the rest of humanity could follow. To see this process at work one need look no further than to the present vexing area of race relationships. The majority will, at any time, take the safer course. But the safer course may not be the right course, when the chips are down and basic decisions are to be made.

Finally, Christians would feel deeply that God deserves better than our second best. If all we are prepared to offer him is our obedience to conventional standards and group decisions, our love is not very mature, our confidence not very deep. It is true that every time we let ourselves take

sides, love or believe in anything very deeply, we are exposing ourselves to the danger of being hurt. There is no way around this. Our Lord certainly shows us this. But to the person who is prepared to love God deeply, the safe middle road seems both unworthy and untrue.

The third way of coming to terms with the problems is the way of trusting acceptance. This is the ideal of the Christian life. The person thinking in these terms is very far from wanting to reject his freedom or from trying to bury it. He reasons that if God made us free, and made freedom part of the condition of creation under which all mankind must live, then his purposes required that freedom. If God had merely wanted obedient dolls who would duly perform as instinct and impulse directed them, he could perfectly well have created us that way. The fact that he didn't tells us something about him: namely, that he has a purpose which only human freedom can serve. Even though that gift of freedom may be a self-limitation on the part of God—even though he may have to pay the cost of that freedom himself—still it points toward an end which is dear to him and to a fulfilment of his purpose.

Very well then, suppose that we take this experience of freedom and responsibility as a gift of God, appointed by him for his own purposes. What can we learn about those purposes and about the way in which we can most completely fulfil them? What kind of universe is it, what kind of people are we, and what is the end toward which God wants us to move?

Some of the answers we come to are fairly clear. Perhaps the chief of them is the sense, so often expressed in Scripture, that the ultimate goal of all this mortal life is to learn how to love God better and, in the light of that love, to love

one another better. *Holy Scripture seems to point us more and more toward a completely personal world and a completely and sublimely personal relationship with God.* It is of the nature of love to seek an answering love. This may be our deepest earthly insight into the nature of God and his purposes.

In order to love, we must be free not to love. In order to respond to the personal God, we must be free not to respond. Here would seem to be the primary locus of freedom in God's scheme of things. But all that we would say about God is, in almost equal measure, said about our neighbor as well. To choose to love one's neighbor may be the noblest act of the human spirit, particularly when that neighbor happens to be an enemy. This is freedom being used to its best advantage in the accomplishment of God's unceasing purpose.

The hardest part of freedom to unravel is the relationship of freedom with pain and evil. Questions in this area come to every Christian, and certainly to every clergyman, countless times. Man's *misuse* of freedom brings pain and undeserved suffering and moral evil to other people. This would seem to be an inescapable concomitant of freedom; and there are many who would feel that the gift of freedom when it brings suffering in its train is a curse and not a blessing.

Christianity has no easy answer to this. Indeed, it has no complete answer at all, and we ought not try to formulate one. For the problem of evil is sharp and dark because evil itself is mysterious. Doubtless in the eyes of eternity there is a truth and a rightness hidden in it; but for us the lessons of patience and love and self-restraint and endless confidence in God may be the only lessons we can learn.

Certain words become particularly significant to Christians in this coming to terms with freedom. One of them is the word *vocation*. When we accept our freedom as the gift of God and as necessary to the fulfilment of God's purpose, then we begin to think in far deeper terms about what we mean by vocation. Marriage is part of our vocation; so is our home, our membership in the Church, our life as citizens, our preparation for eternity—these are all really parts of what the Christian refers to as vocation. *Vocation, then, is the way in which we raise our daily life to the level of God*—a way of seeing how each of the multitude of small choices becomes part of our response to God's call of us.

This may help to break down artificial barriers in our lives—barriers between our jobs and all the other interests we have. We ought not to have such barriers: our jobs ought to be one of the ways we have of serving and praising God. And when our concept of vocation widens to include the whole of our life, then we are helped toward finding a kind of unity in the different parts of our being.

A sense of vocation helps to deepen further our awareness of the importance and the holiness of even the small choices we make. Saints are people who find holiness in the tiniest matters—who take every choice seriously because it is part of their life-long dialogue with God. This is a lesson every thoughtful Christian must learn.

A second word which looms very large in Christian eyes is the word *Incarnation*. God's purpose was not exhausted in giving us the gift and problem of freedom. He himself chose to come inside our freedom and to live it out with us under the same conditions which we must face. These are of course afterthoughts—the actual order of events was the

other way round. Christianity did not begin as a theory about the Incarnation; it began as a profound allegiance to Jesus Christ, and an equally deep sense that our manhood—our humanity—was one with his. We heard him, we loved him, we followed him; and then looking back on this experience of discipleship, we began to see all that was hidden in it. In Christ God consecrated the way of freedom for mankind. We saw freedom worked out to the full. We saw it raised to its highest levels. We saw how freedom became love. We saw how freedom became an obedience to the will of God. And we saw all this not in terms of far-away ideals, but in terms of a pattern of life which ordinary people like ourselves could follow in the example, and in the company, of Christ. There is no doubt about the utter and complete centrality of Christ, *the* free Man, in all of our thought and talk about the freedom of the Christian life.

In Christ, and to a lesser degree in ourselves, we come to see the importance of a third word—the word *service* as the Prayer Book uses it, or *obedience*. Freedom might well be described in some connections as an absence of restraint; and so it is. But at a deeper level it doesn't seem to be so much a freedom from restraint as a willing acceptance of certain kinds of restraint. This is a rather paradoxical matter, as when the Prayer Book, in a classic phrase, speaks of the God "whose service is perfect freedom." Actually, service and freedom might seem to be two completely opposed conceptions. In point of fact, we learn little by little that they are not opposed at all; but that service to the right purpose or ideal may be the highest form of freedom. Christ's supreme act of self-offering on the Cross remains in our imaginations the greatest act of freedom the world has ever seen.

To a lesser degree we find something of this same truth in ourselves. We look at the man or woman who stands out in our minds because of his service to community, neighborhood or nation; and we may be impressed with the fact that in so doing he has given up much of his freedom to do other things. But this consideration seems small by comparison with the splendid way in which he has been able to *use* himself, his talents and opportunities, in the service of a very great end.

We learn this lesson in even smaller ways—in the loyalties and duties of family life or friendship, where we willingly give up a certain liberty of action, a certain freedom, for the sake of a loyalty which lays its command on us. What Christ does for us is to show us the principle of service and obedience realized in its most profound meaning. He says to us, "This is the way freedom leads: it leads to obedience; it leads to offering."

And here I have introduced a fourth word which is perhaps the supreme word to use in connection with freedom—the word *offering*. If we are right that what God is after in endowing us with freedom and in creating the kind of universe in which men and women have to make choices, then the purpose of that creation must be to respond to him who made it, in loving, willing self-offering. Again the Cross is our chief teacher in this. The great example of "Christ the Victim, Christ the Priest" stands always in the imagination of humanity as the symbol of the finest act of freedom. Man alone, the creature of God in a creaturely universe, could never make that offering by himself. But because of Christ's offering, we are able to identify ourselves with him and to make our little offerings "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This is the Christian paradox. Believing this way, the Christian must see that the final end and purpose of his freedom is to learn how to give back that freedom into the hands of the One who gave it to him in the first place. If all that God had wanted was obedient performance why did he not make us so that we could do so without all this complicated business of choice? This is the heart of the paradox.

The Christian's answer to it would probably be that the acts in themselves are not terribly important. This world—this life in this universe—is not the most important area. It is the world of probation where, within all the limitations and imperfections of a universe of time and space, the free persons whom God created are given the chance to learn to love him and to enter into a free and trusting intercourse with him. What he is interested in is not acts but persons. What he is interested in is not time but eternity. Therefore, it is essential to any thought about Christian living to keep the perspective that Christian theology tries to keep between this probationary life, so short and so tangled, and the full and perfect life just over the barrier of time and space, yet surrounding us at every point. Christian living is always a preparation for eternity, and for that commonwealth of free persons choosing to love and to praise God in response to the love which brought them into existence.

Thus, freedom becomes not only a condition of our way of life but the way of life itself. Our mortal existence isn't simply a matter of doing the best we can with our ignorance and our obligations, hoping that we will choose wisely and charitably. The very choosing itself, no matter how imperfect the choices may be, is the stuff out of which our companionship with God is made. Our acts, our disciplines, our

attempts to obey our duties, our conscientious decisions—these all are important not for themselves alone, but because they are the words which compose our conversation with God. The Christian life, then, is *a continuing personal relationship with the Creator through the Redeemer in the power of the Holy Spirit*. It is man's response to what God has begun—we love him because he first loved us. It is not a lonely reaching out from our freedom to a distant God. It is an answer to what God is continually doing for us and giving to us. All life is therefore filled with the personal holiness of the Creator himself. It is a trust given to us to be reverently received and to be thoughtfully administered as becomes Christian stewards. This is the summary of Christian living.

JOHN McG. KRUMM:

Our Law and Our Liberty ☞

3.

To become a Christian—to submit, that is, to Baptism—is to recognize that Christ has a *right* to command us in this way; and, having submitted ourselves to Christ's authority in this one respect, we acknowledge ourselves duty-bound to respect his authority in *all* matters. There is, then, a Law of Christ, and this would seem to set limitations on our freedom. In one respect, it does. But in submitting to this Law (which in certain ways curtails our freedom), the Christian finds something better than freedom: he finds, in fact, *liberty*.

The following chapter explains why it is that liberty can be had only within a structure of law. In addition, the essay shows just cause why the Episcopal Church with its rubrics and its canons, its proscriptions and prohibitions, its polity and its disciplines, provides an arena in which Christian liberty may come to full expression. —EDITOR

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Our Law and Our Liberty

The Anglican Church, like the other Churches which shared in the Protestant Reformation, has always looked to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments as the fundamental source of our teaching. To consider the question of our law and our liberty, therefore, we are obliged first of all to consider how these two elements in our life and their relationship one to another are treated in the New Testament. It is abundantly clear in the New Testament that freedom and liberty are essential and distinguishing marks of the Christian's life. In the writings of St. Paul especially, one of the chief contrasts between the new Israel which is the Christian Church and the old Israel is the atmosphere and spirit of liberty. St. Paul frequently distinguishes the freedom and responsibility which the Christian has in his relationship to God from the inhibited and enslaved kind of relationship which was, he believes, characteristic of Judaism. *For freedom Christ has set us free*, he writes to the Galatians; *stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery*. (Galatians 5:1) When the New Testament uses the phrase "sons of God," it establishes as the ideal of the Christian life a mature and responsible liberty, which is wholly inconsistent with any kind of blind subservience or unquestioning obedience.

Although this point is not made so explicitly in the Gospels, the whole manner and method of our Lord's ministry points toward it. His reticence (at least in the Synoptic

Gospels) about his messianic character, the enigmatic and ambiguous message of the parables which leaves those who do not wish to see or hear it, free to miss the point of what he is saying, the insistence upon a free and responsible decision concerning discipleship, a decision which may separate one from his tradition and background, for example, his statement about coming *to set a man against his father*—all this bespeaks a God who will not break down the freedom of his children, who will not force himself upon them, but who wills for them a wholly uncoerced, free and enlightened relationship of trust and of loyalty to him.

THE ACCENT ON AUTHORITY

There is, on the other hand, a similar stress in the New Testament on authority. *Authority* was one of the notes of the ministry of Christ which frequently attracted attention. *For with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits and they come out.* (Luke 4:36) What is more, this same authority is bestowed upon his followers. *Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.* (Luke 9:1-2) In a similar way the author of the Epistle to Titus urges his young reader, *Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.* (Titus 2:15)

It is interesting to notice that the same Greek word—*exousia*—is translated both as “authority” and as “power.” That is to say, authority is always linked with effective power. We make the same connection when we speak, for example, of someone who plays the piano “with authority.” This means that the pianist in question has a command of

the techniques and possibilities of the instrument by reason of certain capacities and abilities and is free from slavish dependence on rules and regulations, conventions and traditions. Authority in the New Testament is not asserted legalistically so much as it is demonstrated effectively. The authority which was given to the disciples, for example, was manifested in the power of their message and mission to accomplish man's release from the bondage of sin and to give them the power to lead the Christian life of trust and love.

Christian liberty is qualified in the New Testament by only one consideration, and that is love. In I Corinthians St. Paul warns his readers that their liberty must not become a stumbling block to others, that although they have freedom under Christ, they are at the same time captured and held fast by the compulsion of loving and serving and building up their brethren. *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.* (I Cor. 9:19) The liberty which Christianity confers is a liberty to be what one was intended by God to be—the servant and brother of fellow-men. It is not unqualified license nor unrestricted self-expression. What is expedient for the welfare of others? What builds up the other man in his own freedom and love? These questions are always relevant, and the answers to them determine the ways in which our own freedom is expressed.

It will thus appear that, for the New Testament, law and liberty are not two antithetical elements in Christian life and experience, but that they are complementary. Indeed law exists for the sake of liberty; the authority of Christ and his apostles is to be acknowledged precisely because it frees men from frustration, legalism, and the power of anxiety

and self-centeredness. In a similar manner in the early Church the developing structures and order of ecclesiastical life were accepted and maintained in order that the liberating message of the Gospel in all its power and effectiveness might be preached. The New Testament had already made it clear that power and authority were never to be sought in the Christian Church for their own sake (cf. Matthew 20:25, *You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you*). The development of the monarchical episcopacy, of the canon of Scripture, of the authority of creeds and the other decisions of the Ecumenical Councils—all of these were designed to safeguard the original integrity and power of the Christian message, not to establish some legalistic and authoritarian structure to which individual Christians were to be blindly and unquestioningly subservient.

AUTHORITY AND REASON

It is beyond the possibility set by the limitations of a chapter to discuss the ways in which this original Christian conception of authority became corrupt and subject to serious abuse in later periods of Church history. More important for our purposes is the attempt in the Anglican Reformation to recover this conception of authority as justified for the sake of the achievement of freedom and liberty. Like the Reformation elsewhere, the English version was strongly influenced by Renaissance Humanism. Humanism emphasized the importance of the illumination of the human mind and the right of such an enlightened mind to judge and discriminate regarding the traditions and regulations of the Church. It is true that in the famous con-

troversy between Luther and Erasmus, the Humanists were found to be trusting too much in merely intellectual enlightenment, not understanding, as Luther so clearly did, that even an intellectually informed and enlightened mind may be in bondage by reason of inner anxiety and self-preoccupation. But Luther and the Humanists were in agreement about one thing: the goal and ideal of human life is liberty, a freedom of the Christian man which is wholly inconsistent with the kind of unquestioning servility which too much of medieval Catholicism had encouraged.

By 1600 a crisis arose within the ranks of the Reformation itself in which Anglicanism—it seems to me—made a unique and important contribution to our understanding of the relationship of law and liberty. This crisis arose when a second-generation Calvinism, much narrower and more slavish in its attitude toward the Bible than John Calvin, sought to enforce upon the Reformation churches an uncritical bibliolatry. This view of the Scriptures regarded them as a collection of prescriptive rules for Christian life.

As against this conception of the Scriptures, and indeed of the Christian life itself, Richard Hooker argued for the essential reasonableness of God's requirements and insisted that, except in essential matters of faith in which the Bible message must be held to be sufficient and therefore authoritative, man was free by the use of his reason, playing upon the wealth of human history and tradition, to regulate his life and the life of the Church. In this connection, for example, Hooker argues for episcopacy as the most reasonable form of church government. He explicitly rejects any easy appeal to Scripture in the following passage: "If therefore we did seek to maintain that which most advantageth our own cause, the very best way for us and the strongest

against them [the Puritans] were to hold, even as they do, that in Scripture there must needs be found some particular form of church polity which God hath instituted, and which for that very cause belongeth to all churches, to all times. But with any such partial eye to respect ourselves, and by cunning to make those things seem the truest which are the fittest to serve our purpose, is a thing which we neither like nor mean to follow.”¹

Hooker would not commend episcopacy on the plea that “it’s in the Book.” Episcopacy is to be commended to the reason of free men who make their decisions accordingly. This exaltation of reason continued to be characteristic of Anglicanism. It forestalled any bondage to the Bible such as has plagued other Protestant churches in the so-called Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. It established as the ideal of the Church a fellowship of mature and enlightened sons of God, freely and responsibly seeking his will and purpose for them and their lives in the confidence and trust of his love and mercy. The authority of the Church’s chief ministers, whether the Sovereign, the Bishops, the Parliament, the Convocation or whatever, *was always* to be submitted to the test of reasonableness. The difference in spirit between this and either a hierarchical authoritarianism or a bibliolatrous fundamentalism seems to us, who stand within this tradition, to be the difference between freedom and bondage.

The Anglican appeal to reasonableness is made clear in the striking absence of any substantial mass of regulatory detail either in the Prayer Book or in the canon law. So marked is this absence that we often appear quite anarchical to outsiders. The rules to which an Episcopalian must sub-

scribe are few and are limited to what is absolutely necessary in order to secure fellowship and faith. One must "worship God every Sunday in his Church," one must "work and pray and give for the spread of his kingdom," one must observe certain days and seasons as times of fasting and abstinence (although no authority is given for anyone to specify to the individual what form such an observance must take), one must not be an open or notorious evil liver nor be obstinate in maintaining malice and hatred toward a fellow-Christian. Except for the Church's legislation on marriage, to which we must give some separate attention, that is the exact extent of the rules for the Christian life which the Church officially lays down for her members. Does any other Christian body rest as much weight upon the reason and conscience of her members as does the Episcopal Church?

FREEDOM AND REASON

The same freedom is observed in the Church's worship. How little regulation exists may be seen from the scanty character of the rubrics of the Prayer Book. Because of the limitations of space we can do nothing more than refer to the admirable sections in Professor Dawley's book, *The Episcopal Church and Its Work*, which discuss the varieties in our worship, the roominess which can embrace elaborate ceremonial on the one hand and austere simplicity on the other. The limits set to this freedom are two: There must be nothing done which frustrates or distorts the plain purpose of the Book of Common Prayer, for this would destroy the integrity and proportion of the Christian Faith as this Church has received it and would impair the effectiveness of the Gospel. Secondly, all things must be done to

the use of edifying, to building up the Christian fellowship in love. The clergy are tempted to use the very considerable freedom in worship which they are allowed in the Anglican Communion to introduce novelties into the service—and a novelty is still a novelty even if it is an ancient practice that hasn't been seen nor heard of since the third century! Without pleading for stiff-necked traditionalism, may I suggest that the clergy meditate on I Corinthians 10:23, before embarking on some of their glamorous ceremonial and liturgical expeditions: *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*

Some of you know the passage in C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* which treats of this very matter, having the Devil say: "You would expect to find the 'low' churchman genuflecting and crossing himself lest the weak conscience of his 'high' brother should be moved to irreverence, and the 'high' one refraining from these excesses lest he should betray his 'low' brother into idolatry. And so it would have been but for our ceaseless labour. Without that the variety of usage within the Church of England might have become a positive hotbed of charity and humility."² *But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.* (I Cor. 8:9)

By its strong affirmation of the principle of tradition—not conceived of as a dead-hand from the past but as a living and developing body of principle freshly reinterpreted in the light of new occasions and new duties—Anglicanism has achieved a balance of law and liberty which is, I believe, the wonder and the envy of many other Christian bodies.

This development was carried one step further in the

constitutional provisions for the Anglican Church in this country after the Revolution. William White, Rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, was a convinced advocate of the adoption of democratic principles into the Church's life. His proposals were sometimes daring and radical to his contemporaries. The reactions to his suggestion that laymen share in all the deliberative, judicial and administrative functions of the Church brought a storm of disapproval, especially as it involved laymen sitting on trial courts for the discipline and possible deposition of presbyters and bishops. One shocked comment, reflecting social snobbery as well as ecclesiastical conservatism, speculated that the bishop's barber might shave him in the morning "and in the afternoon vote him out of his office." The more conservative Samuel Seabury, in a discussion of the rights of the laity with respect to the choice of their minister, insisted that such a right must be established only with the proviso that the choice have "the Bishop's concurrence or license"—a point of view that is strongly asserted in certain current controversies in the Church—and just as strongly denied. Without describing in detail all the currents of thought and pressures of circumstance that produced the final result, it is sufficient to say that William White won his main point and that the laity of the Church were given unprecedented authority and influence in the very highest ecclesiastical councils. The laity of the Episcopal Church exercise the power of veto, for example, in any changes in the liturgy, in the election of bishops, and on other centrally important matters. Making use of the principle of checks and balances, so conspicuous in the constitutional forms for the new United States of America, the Episcopal Church sought to do full justice both to the concepts of the freedom and responsi-

bility of the laity and to the concepts of episcopal authority and of clerical autonomy with respect to what William White once described as "such powers as are purely spiritual."

It is in this latter point that the Episcopal Church differs most sharply from the churches of an exclusively congregational polity. The preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments are not subject to the veto power of the laity but rest wholly within the competence of the clergy. An apt illustration of this point, and the way in which it ministers to greater freedom, is the relatively greater degree of what might be called "the liberty of prophesying" which characterizes the pulpits of the Episcopal Church—in contrast both to an authoritarian hierarchical church and to a wholly democratically controlled body. It is clear that a pulpit which is silenced at the whim of the congregation can never fulfil any significant prophetic function. The achievement of racial integration within the parish church is also obviously far more easily accomplished if the decision about baptism, reception to communion, and such matters are not subject to the vote or decision of the congregation but are recognized as a part of the spiritual function which the clergy are to exercise under the authority which has been given them by Christ himself. In this balance of law and liberty the Church seeks to express the central concern of the New Testament: that men shall achieve the dignity of the sons of God by accepting freely and willingly the good news of the Gospel and sharing in the power and life of the Church and her sacraments which come to them in their original integrity and effectiveness through the authorized ministry, the credal rule of faith, and the authorized canon of Holy Scripture.

MORALITY AND FREEDOM

There remains one further area of freedom within the life of the Church which deserves attention, and that is freedom in ethics and morality. True to the New Testament, Anglicanism has never fastened upon her adherents any legalistic or authoritarian conception of the moral law. The love and obedience of mature sons of God can never be caught within the confines of codes and regulations. *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another*, says St. Paul (Rom. 13:8). St. Augustine adds his own version of the same insight: "Love God and do what thou wilt."³ It is true that Anglicanism has produced its share of moral theology—especially in the seventeenth century—and that there has been within Anglicanism a concern for the place of natural law. As Richard Hooker would say, it would obviously be most "unreasonable" to dismiss the wisdom and experience of the past in determining the way in which Christian love ought to express itself. But Anglicanism has avoided what John Wild of Harvard has called "the rigid and inflexible Roman version" of natural law. "We are in a position [as Anglicans]," he writes, "to take a more reasonable middle course, and to defend this . . . doctrine of moral norms grounded in nature as a flexible body of knowledge which is still open to further advance, and which clearly recognizes the basic need for freedom."⁴

The way in which Anglicanism works this out may be illustrated by our treatment of marriage. In the very nature of the marriage relationship, Anglicanism would say, permanence and indissolubility are involved. The Church is not free to do anything which would suggest that less than a permanent life-long relationship between man and wife is

the ideal of marriage. Quite plainly, however, the Church's canon law does not treat this principle as a rigid and inflexible regulation for the blind obedience of her children in any and all circumstances. This is proved by the provision that those who have "married otherwise than as the word of God and the discipline of this Church allow" may be retained within the sacramental life and fellowship of the Church, provided the Bishop admits them to the sacraments under a pastoral judgment which, as the canons say, is governed by "the godly discipline both of justice and of mercy." The Anglican position is an expedient and empirical one. The use of a marriage service which includes promises made "until death us do part" cannot be allowed in cases where a former valid marriage has been contracted. On the other hand, by reason of the "hardness of men's hearts" (as our Lord himself once described it) this ideal is sometimes impossible of fulfilment. The Church does not necessarily exclude people in such circumstances from her fellowship nor deny to them the opportunity to find in a new marriage relationship the grace which such a partnership can mediate. Surely here Anglicanism recognizes the "moral norms grounded in nature," as Professor Wild says, but does not give it a "rigid or inflexible" interpretation.

The Church's rubrics recognize only two grounds in morality for excommunication and both of them are sins against fellowship and love. A minister may repel from the communion a notorious and open evil liver or one who has proved obstinately unwilling to reconcile himself to his brother with whom he has quarreled. It has been observed that the stress in the first provision is on the open and notorious quality of the man's evil life. Does this mean that Anglicanism condones secret and discreet evil living? Of

course not, but the evil life which offends the conscience of fellow Christians is a far more serious fault, for it involves the destruction of the faith of a brother for whom Christ died. The Church is willing to retain in her fellowship people who are very far short of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, who express their fellowship one with another in a general confession of sin and a sharing in the forgiving and empowering gift of Christ's love in the Holy Communion. Only that which destroys this fellowship and so frustrates the effective preaching of the Gospel is of sufficient seriousness to merit exclusion and separation.

Thus in many aspects of her life the Church displays the fundamental conception of law and liberty which is inherent in the New Testament itself—a law which exists in order that men may know Christ in all his fullness and in his power to set men free; a liberty which expresses itself in fellowship, in love and in faith, in that service of God which is indeed perfect freedom.

LAWRENCE ROSE:

Our Personal Life 4.

In this chapter our attention is directed to what might be called "the inner circles of our concern as Christian men and women": our personal life, as individuals set in families and surrounded by neighbors, as having to work in order to live, as having money or else the lack of it, as experiencing moral victories and moral defeats, and as having finally to die.

Since no one is exempt from such concerns, the question is: In what mood or spirit is the person encompassed by these circles within circles to approach his task and to make a go of it?

—EDITOR

The Very Reverend Lawrence Rose, S.T.D., sometime Dean of the Berkeley Divinity School, has been, since 1947, Dean of The General Theological Seminary. From 1934 to 1940 he was in Tokyo as Professor of Christian Apologetics and Religious Education at The Central Theological College of the Nippon Sei Ko Kwai. In spite of the heavy burden of administration connected with his present post, Dean Rose continues to teach, inside the Seminary and out. His field of special competence is Moral Theology.

Our Personal Life

"We cannot escape the fact," writes Michael de la Bedoyere in *The Layman in the Church*, "that we must all answer for the way our lives witness to the Christ by whose power they should, for Christians, be lived." ⁵

Only against such a background would it be possible to survey what it means to be a Christian in personal living of one's faith, in family relationships and in the occupations by which men and women sustain themselves through the time allotted to them in this earthly existence.

"We cannot escape the fact that we must answer." Therein is the affirmation of our freedom, our ability to respond as persons to the truth of our being in God. Whatever must be recognized of the poverty of our knowledge and strength—whatever may be admitted of the limitations our times, our heritage, our circumstances, our bodily and psychological natures impose on us to constrict our freedom, whatever may be the distortions in vision and desire and effort to which we are prone—the fact of our calling to sonship to God remains. And despite what has been called the "general recoil from responsibility" afflicting men in these confusing times, we know both from the side of conscience and from the side of faith that we cannot escape responsibility for proving our sonship or denying it. We know, too, that this proving or denying, affirming or refusing of the truth of our being and destiny are accomplished not alone through those moments of religious de-

votion and closeness to God when fulfilment of life seems a present possession, but also through those other moments of emptiness and revulsion when we could almost "curse God and die." No, life is not that simple; our fulfilment or rejection of its meaning for us is also, inescapably, accomplished through the detailed decisions and choices whereby our lives affect the conditions under which we and others pursue our destinies. *By their fruits ye shall know them.* "We must all answer for the way our lives witness to the Christ." T. S. Eliot once wrote: "So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good; so far as we do evil or good, we are human; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least, we exist."⁶ To live as men is to choose, to decide, to act. And the eternal is involved in every instance of action, that is, of conscious initiation of energy. Christ is witnessed to, by affirmation or denial, in the Christian's every decision; every choice bears us towards or away from the truth of our being in God. The sum of these choices, decisions, acts, is our life, our offering, and the basis of final judgment upon us. *Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me*—what I am and what I become through all my days and in all my relationships—*praise his holy name.* (Psalm 103:1)

The inescapable fact and challenge of our freedom; Christ as the supreme pattern of right response to God; and Christ's power to reproduce himself "within our own freedom": these are the basic themes in any discussion of the Christian life. To appropriate them in our lives can bring harmony out of chaos, and make the Christian's working out of his destiny a matter of "courageously facing responsibilities and choosing the way of God's pattern,

God's kingdom, from within the very texture of the world." 7

Our own personal life and devotions, our life in our own families, and the occupations which sustain our very existence, are the most intimate areas of our responsibility. Yet I believe we need to recognize a curious and important fact of general behavior in these areas of immediate and constant commerce with the world about us. A vast proportion of our time and energy is spent within these circles. And so vast a proportion of the decisions and acts that constitute our lives is demanded of us in these relationships that we tend, self-protectively, to forget that they are moments wherein we affirm or deny our Christian responsibility. We tend to let mere habit, or inertia, or impulse take over. It *feels like* a real decision when we choose between voting for or against a bond issue, giving money to a charity or buying a new car, protesting or accepting a racial injustice. But when it comes to whether we play a moment with Johnny or slap him down, whether we respond harshly or gently when our better halves annoy us, whether we treat the girl at the check-out counter in the supermarket as another item of machinery or as a human being, we often belie our own humanity and our Christian responsibility by refusing to recognize that here too we are choosing—and ultimately—for or against God. These occasions of constant and intimate commerce with the world about us can too easily be reduced to moments of reflex and reaction rather than of action. We too readily tend not to give that "creative attention," that reverence to things and people close at hand, and to possibilities of witness to Christ in immediate circumstance, that the fulfilment of our being as Christians requires of us. This spirit of reverence is something quite essential to Christian

living, and more especially important in these specific, intimate areas covered in our topic.

Reverence is not usually listed among the virtues, and yet it has, and rightly, been called a "fundamental moral attitude,"⁸ a bearing or orientation of mind and spirit in response to reality that is basic to all virtues and all good living. The Bible does not speak much of reverence; but I know of no better word to summarize the attitude the biblical writers exhibit towards the world and towards life in it.

*The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is,
The compass of the world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas, and stablished it upon
the floods.* (Psalm 24:1, 2.)

*All thy works praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints give thanks
unto thee.
They show the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;
That thy power, thy glory, and mightiness of thy kingdom,
might be known unto men.* (Psalm 145:10-12)

The attitude of reverence is born out of an apprehension of the dimension of depth in things—a glimpse beyond the immediate surface they present. It develops in us as we become aware of the relatedness of each fact of experience—each thing, each event, each person, each possibility for action the world presents to us—to its ultimate ground in God the "Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible."

As we sense that relatedness of all things to God, we can appreciate the truth that "there is a value inherent in every stone, in a drop of water, in a blade of grass . . . as an entity which possesses its own being, which is such and not otherwise."⁹ Seen in this perspective there is *no*

thing which is merely something we can use; everything is to be "taken seriously in itself"—allowed "the necessary space for its proper unfolding."¹⁰

Is one mistaken in suspecting that reverence is a commodity that is in altogether too short supply among our American people? Perhaps it has never been a very marked characteristic in our history, as our forebears faced an unfolding continent with vast riches open to their exploitation. A competitive spirit, a habit of thinking of things in their surface, instrumental value, and genius in discovery of techniques of control have led us to regard things not as they have their being from God, but simply as they can minister to what we think is our welfare.

Too typical for comfort is the attitude of the farmer who, when he was reproached for using methods of agriculture which he knew contributed to the great dust-bowl of our Southwest a few years ago, maintained that the soil was his to use as he pleased, even though that meant using it up. Or again, think of the bull-dozer, one of the deeply disquieting symbols of our civilization. It is a marvel of power, and of usefulness in man's command of nature—a command that is divinely ordained and right and good in itself, but demonic when it is exercised, as it too often is, with insolence and ruthless impertinence.

At the very least, irreverence is the failure to appreciate the worth, the independent being and dignity, and the right to respect that are inherent in things and people and institutions; and at its worst, it is the insolence of measuring the value of things by their subservience to our own self-gratification.

When we consider the moral problems, the diseases, the sins, that afflict us in our personal lives and in the inner

circles of our life in commerce with the world, in family and in work, I cannot but believe that a lack of reverence—a failure to recognize that all things that have any being at all have it from God—is close to the root of most of our moral troubles. This world is so constituted that he who seeks self-fulfilment regardless, or at the expense of other people and even “things”—treating them as though they had no “insides,” no depths, no “subjectivity”—not only takes away their rights, but destroys his own being as a man.

Let me say, parenthetically, how much I dislike the manner of speaking which bids us to treat other people as *persons* and not as *things*. I deplore it not because of the way it would have us respond to people—according them the status of subjects rather than mere objects—but for quite another reason. In a recent story in *Field and Stream*, a lad says to his fishing and hunting mentor, “You taught me that there isn’t anybody who doesn’t feel like he’s a person too.” Right and good. But to speak of treating others as persons and not as things implies that the rest of God’s creation has no title to our respect, that the tree, the stone, the ocean wave, the dawning day all are mere objects having no particular identity nor claim upon us. The Christian knows that there is no such thing as a mere thing.

Simone Weil speaks truly to us here when she says about the law of love, “Our love should stretch as widely across all space, and should be as equally distributed in every portion of it, as is the very light of the sun. The friends of God should love him to the point of merging their love into his with regard to all things here below.”¹¹

Is not this precisely in line with what Jesus was saying, in words that are often misunderstood—*Blessed are the*

poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. (Matt. 5:3-5) Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:3) Is it not right to translate this into the fundamental moral attitude of reverence? Thus: those are the happy ones of this earth, and those fulfil their humanity who acknowledge their poverty (their dependence upon facts and forces which come to them as *gifts*), who recognize the dignity of all things and abandon themselves to the values inherent in all things, and who are open and alive as little children to the mystery and grandeur and beauty of the world that God has created.

In a very real sense Christian living starts from here, to realize the promises of God—the rich possibilities of existence in this life and the life to come.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?

He who has clean hands, and a pure heart; who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully.

He will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of his salvation. (Psalm 24:3-5)

Essential to the right issue of the exercise of our freedom in decision and action is reverent concern for the fulfilment of the purpose of all creation. *Thy kingdom come.* Must we not take it that the possible right solution of the problems that beset us on the way requires such reverence?

People speak of “self-acceptance” as the *sine qua non* in the acceptance of others and of the vicissitudes of life. But there is often a note of querulousness about their manner in so speaking—a begrudging tone: self-acceptance, other acceptance, life acceptance *in spite of* all in self, others, and life that calls for hostility and rejection. We do

not need to blind ourselves to tragedy, nor minimize the obduracy and impersonality of nature, nor discount the cruelty and pain of human existence to find their perspective wrong. On the contrary, reverence makes men more acutely aware of "the tears in things" because of its penetration beyond the surface into the depths, its projection of us behind the scenes of the drama in every existence.

But acceptance is not truly healing or fruitful unless it is reverent. And reverent acceptance *is* healing and fruitful in living out our Christian vocation.

Reverence begins at the center, in acknowledging our very freedom as a gracious gift from God. It governs our attitude towards ourselves as creatures—a term that calls attention at once to our origin in the divine will and to our humble status. It accords dignity and worth to our equipment for "this vale of soul-making," coming gladly to terms with our "bodies, parts and passions" in our psychophysical constitution, male and female, male or female. "Acceptance of ourselves from the hands of God, as gift," in Brunner's phrase, is the essence of the matter for Christians.

And that necessarily carries with it acceptance of our individuality in temperament, inheritance and circumstance, as well as in respect to the openness of possibility in the dynamics of life. "Praise thou the Lord, O my soul; let my whole being praise his holy Name."

It carries, too, the obligation of "creative attention" to others, all others that cross our paths, especially in the intimacy of the family, to parents, husbands, wives and children, according each the regard we know we need to be accorded ourselves. I say especially here, because failure of reverence in the intimacies cannot be compensated for by apparent success at longer range.

And reverence alone can turn our possession of things, of power, and of money into true stewardship, at the same time delivering us from covetousness in regard to the possessions of others.

It is, moreover, an essential ingredient of vocation. Someone once said that every occupation is either a vocation or a racket. That our several occupations should be vocations, indeed, is the precise force of the prayer within all prayer, *Thy will be done*, when that prayer is not just a vain generalized aspiration for a nicer world, but is rather allowed to come close home to where we live our lives from day to day and hour to hour.

It might be thought on the surface, that reverent acceptance of life and its possibilities logically demands fear, horror, rejection of the end to our earthly existence. Not so for the Christian. Like all other events in which we participate, death is compounded of Divine ordinance or gift *and* human action. Goethe's mother is said to have sent down word to a late caller, "Tell him that Frau Rath is busy dying." I take it that something like this is meant when Bishop Bayne writes of our Christian responsibility "to live with death, daily," in the assurance that God reigns here also, in his love and mercy. Reverence regards death as having a normal and natural place in the existence of one who trusts that he will one day know even as he is fully known.

To live, to meet ourself and others, to encounter the "changes and chances of this mortal life," all in a reverent spirit, seeing in the facts and forces that govern our existence "nothing other than what God has done and the way he works"—this gives a man or woman a fundamental and steady bearing toward living the Christian life.

CARROLL E. SIMCOX:

Our Life in the Parish 5.

We learned in the last chapter that reverence is the mood or spirit in the power of which we are to approach all the common ventures of life. But where and by what means is this spirit to be encountered, engendered, and enkindled?

In the parish, answers this new chapter.

A most unlikely place, is the retort of more than a few.

Yes, replies our author unperturbedly, *a most unlikely place!* Yet, precisely in the parish, and nowhere else, is this one thing necessary to be found. —EDITOR

The Reverend Carroll Eugene Simcox, Ph.D., Assistant Minister to St. Thomas Church, New York City, is the author of a widely known trilogy of books: *Living the Creed*, *Living the Lord's Prayer*, and *Living the Ten Commandments*. The Bishop of New York Book for 1955 was Dr. Simcox's study of *The Words of Our Worship*. Recently he has published *Understanding the Sacraments* and *They Met at Philippi*. Shortly, Dr. Simcox will become Rector of St. Mary's Church, Tampa, Florida.

Our Life in the Parish

*To live with the saints in heaven
Is bliss and glory.
To live with the saints on earth
Is often another story.*

Indeed it is. Nobody who has ever tried living with the saints on earth—and this means living in a Christian parish—will question the truth of this. Our subject is our life in the parish, and I can state my whole thesis in a sentence: Our life in our parish is a vitally necessary part of our life in Christ. Our parish is not something which, as Christians, we can take or leave as a matter of taste. To be in Christ is to be in the Church; to be in the Church is to be in a parish. It is as simple as that, and as hard.

For our purpose we may think of the parish simply as our local, neighborhood unit of the Great Church. The Great Church, *the whole family in heaven and earth* which belongs to Jesus Christ, is a majestic and glorious spectacle to contemplate; but until it has for us “a local habitation and a name,” a definite point in time and space at which we can personally enter into it, it must be for us only a glorious spectacle to contemplate—and that is not sufficient for our salvation.

We must see our parish first of all as God’s gift to us, God’s invitation—and God’s mandate. This invitation, like the invitations in our Lord’s parable of the wedding feast, is not one which we are at liberty to refuse. God bids

us come to the feast of his love which is spread before us in the Church in our neighborhood—our parish. That is where he sets the table and that is the place where he chooses to meet with us. To change the metaphor: the parish is the point of entry which God provides to enable us to enter his hospital for sinners, his army of saints, his community of redemption (or however we may prefer to conceive of the Church of God). A great society for our salvation can do us no good if there is no definite place where we can enter it and take our share in its saving life. To this end God provides the parish. It is the place where we enter heaven and we begin the heavenly life.

Having made that strong statement, I know what is going on in your minds right now. That is one reason why I made it. (The other reason is that it is true.) You are saying now within yourself: "This sounds like what ought to be, but I'm thinking of my parish just as it is. It isn't exactly heavenly, as I think of heaven. Our Rector is a dear man, but must I look forward to an eternity of such dullness as his in heaven? The music we hear and sing is hardly the music of the spheres; I hope that the choral cherubim can do better. Some of our male and female pillars are distinctly sub-angelic. And can it be that there are Every Member Canvasses in heaven? Maybe I'm in the wrong parish for this preview of paradise."

In all such melancholy musing we are dreaming of what our parish ought to be and deploring what it actually is. But we need to re-examine our whole notion of what our parish ought to be. Let us say that your parish is only too well supplied with dull people, stupid people, spiritually mediocre people, and worse. I want to say quite roundly that this is exactly what ought to be; this is exactly what

the divine Doctor orders for the healing of your soul. He hasn't put you in a parish rich in Augustines and Monicas, Aquinases and Francises, Wesleys and Luthers. He has done something better for you: he has put you in the parish where you are, and just as it is.

I mean this seriously. Whatever there is in your parish, of dullness, mediocrity, worldliness, meanness, and worse, the better it is for your soul—if you know what to do with it. Here is the training-ground for patience, humility, faith, hope, charity, and all the heavenly virtues. A moment ago I mentioned a few great saints. Look into the life of any one of them and you find that he became what he was largely because God placed him among some painfully ordinary souls. It is through loving the hard-to-love that the saint grows into the likeness of Christ.

In this connection, I want to share with you Professor Karl Barth's profound insight into the mystery of how God redeems and sanctifies us through our relationship with other sinners. "When pilgrims on the road of God meet one another," says Barth, "they have something to say. A man may be of value to another man, not because he wishes to be important, not because he possesses some inner wealth of soul, not because of something he is, but because of what he is—not. His importance may consist in his poverty, in his hopes and fears, in his waiting and hurrying, in the direction of his whole being towards what lies beyond his horizon and beyond his power. The importance of an apostle is negative rather than positive. In him a void becomes visible. And for this reason he is something to others: he is able to share grace with them, to focus their attention, and to establish them in waiting and in adoration. The Spirit gives grace through him. Possessing nothing, he has nothing

of his own to offer, and so, the more he imparts, the more he receives; and the more he receives, the more he imparts. There is therefore no question of Christians saying to one another, 'Did you receive from me?' or 'Did I receive from you?' Since neither is, or possesses, anything, nothing passes from the one to the other." ¹²

Barth is saying that in our Christian pilgrimage together we receive from one another's emptiness rather than from one another's fullness; or better, in our common emptiness we all share the fullness of God. This is no sophistry of theological dialectic. It is simple truth. The grace of Christ comes to me, a sinner, through my fellow sinners. The wisdom of Christ comes to me, a fool, through my fellow fools. When my fellow parishioner knows that he is a sinner and a fool, and I know the same about myself; and when he and I both realize that our Lord is the only physician who can help us, then we can receive from one another.

But see what this makes of our ordinary approach to things. It makes hash of it. When you are looking for a school to which to send your child, you look for one in which the teachers and the students are superior. Your theory is that your child will learn, grow, and develop to his maximum through direct exposure to these choice minds and spirits. Your reasoning about this is right. But if you apply the same reasoning to your choice of a parish your reasoning is wrong. What you are looking for here, if you know what you are doing, is not a company of people who have already "arrived" spiritually. If you look for that in this world you must travel a long way, and I can't give you any tips. If you know what to look for, you look for a company of "pilgrims on the road of God" in your neighborhood.

I ask you to think for a moment about a misprint in our Prayer Book which has a real relevancy to our subject. When we recite the Nicene Creed, we say, "I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church." This is a mistake which slipped into our Anglican liturgy centuries ago and has been left uncorrected, for no good reason. It should read "I believe one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." Of course, we say "holy" in the Apostles' Creed, so we are committed to belief in the holiness of the Church. Our Roman Catholic friend, Monsignor Ronald Knox, takes a big-brotherly crack at us by suggesting that the printer who originally dropped "holy" from our Anglican description of the Church may have done it with his tongue in his cheek. Perhaps this will be cleared up for us at the Judgment Day. But in any case we may fail to recognize the holiness of the Church as we experience it in our parish. "Holy" seems far too transcendent a term to describe our Rector, Wardens, and Vestry, our Altar Guild, our Building Debt and Annual Bazaar. I know this feeling because it often miasmatically settles down upon me; and then I have to correct my theology of the Church. I am making the mistake of looking for the Church's holiness in the Church's members, their human character and their human doings. But the Church is holy, as the Prayer Book reminds us, "because the Holy Spirit dwells in it, and sanctifies its members" (*Offices of Instruction*). There is *Something* at work in our parish church which is holy indeed: the power of God changing people, making them holy. If I fail to see this it may be because I don't see as well as I think I see.

The working of the Holy Spirit with our fellow parishioners, the manifested holiness of the Church, can seldom

be seen in the outward and visible details of our neighbors' lives. It must be seen with that inner eye which sees only as it directly experiences. In other words, I can see the work of the Holy Spirit in my fellow parishioner only as I surrender myself to his working in me. This is why no detached observer can ever know the Church, however intelligent and well informed he may be. People say so easily: "I must have a certain detachment if I am to see a thing objectively, as it truly is." This may be true about the seeing of some things. It is not true of seeing the holiness and the divine life of the Church. You see the Church only as you share its life and receive in it, with your brethren, the gracious gifts of God.

There is a definition of the Church by the distinguished Russian Orthodox theologian, Sergius Bulgakov, which I often recall to correct my thinking when I find myself irritated by the organizational fussiness and the human pettiness of the Church. His definition is this: "The Church of Christ is not an institution; it is a new life with Christ and in Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit. Christ, the Son of God, came to earth, was made man, uniting his divine life with that of humanity. This divine-human life he gave to his brethren, who believe on his name. Although he died and rose again and ascended into heaven, he was not separated from his humanity, but remains in it. The light of the resurrection of Christ lights the Church, and the joy of resurrection, of the triumph over death, fills it. The risen Lord lives with us, and our life in the Church is a mysterious life in Christ."¹³

This is what the Church means to me when I am up to it—when I am in my right mind as a Christian—which isn't always. But this wonderful, mysterious, new life in Christ

is something which I must receive directly in my parish church or not at all.

Somebody has spoken of the "scandal of particularity" which peculiarly characterizes the Christian religion. It is an interesting and enlightening phrase. A scandal is a stumbling block. Particularity is the opposite of vague, sweeping, lovely, undemanding generality. Let me illustrate. You know how it is only too possible to love the human race and to hate your next-door neighbor. The human race is a generality; your next-door neighbor is a particularity. And Christianity has this scandal of particularity, inside and outside and all around. Christ says nothing to you about your duty of loving the human race. How we wish that he did, and left it at that! I can curl up in my stuffed chair, slippers on feet and pipe in mouth and highball at side, and love the human race with the greatest of ease. It isn't anywhere near me. It makes no demands upon me at all. This gives a delightful sensation. But my next-door neighbor has a yapping poodle, and I darkly suspect that his politics are all wrong—that is, that they don't agree with mine. He's on the vestry and he thinks he's somebody. His wife's hat makes prayer impossible when I sit in the pew behind theirs. And Christ says that *he and she*—not the human race—are the ones I am to love. The scandal of particularity! There it is. And it is Christianity.

All parish life is steeped and soaked in this scandal of particularity. St. John in one of the Epistles asks how a man can love God, whom he has not seen, if he does not love his brother, whom he has seen. When or if I get to heaven, I want to take up that question with holy John. I have always found his logic puzzling. I find it easier to love the God or brother whom I have not seen, because that way

I do not see those things about him which would irritate me if I could see him. The brother whom I see I see only too clearly, and some things I see make loving him hard going. But I have the uneasy feeling through all this that St. John is right. Love, real love, the love he is talking about, is not something that I now actually possess, toward God or toward anybody else. It is something I must grow into. It exists in me now only in germ. It can burst into bud, and grow, and come at last to final fruition, only if it is given a chance to work here and now with the very nearest material at hand. That means my brother whom I now see, with his yapping poodle, his perverse politics, and his wife with the soul-destroying hat and the *vibrato* soprano. God puts him and me in the same parish and instructs us both: "Go to it."

Thus far, a good deal that I have said about the nature of human fellowship within the parish and our souls' need for it could be said with equal propriety of a fraternal order or a labor union. This theology of parish life which I have undertaken to outline may seem to you quite thinly theological, to say the most. Where is God in this picture?

In any true picture of a true Christian parish, God is at the center. We are constantly tempted to forget this. The parish which is primarily a bee-hive of happy human activity rather than a house of God is no answer to our own need, or our neighbor's; and it must be confessed that a sorry lot of American church life seems to be centered around the coffee table rather than around the Holy Table. We need not scorn the coffee table and all that it represents. The parish dining room is not to be anathematized as a place where, in the words of the Psalmist, *the wild asses quench their thirst*. God is in the midst of us there

as truly as he is in the midst of us in the sanctuary. Even so, there is a question here of vital priorities. St. John again provides us with the right perspective, in these words: *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* (I John 1:3) Thomas Aquinas makes the same point by saying that the union of men with God is the union of men with one another. This must be realized in our parish life. What happens over the coffee table and the bridge table and the sewing table comes *after* what happens over the Holy Table. I suspect that in many an Episcopal mind there lingers a naive faith in an old and well exploded superstition: the superstition that the way to get people to "join our church" is to butter them up with an irresistibly entertaining parish-house program, with something for everybody. The idea here is that we fill the church by first filling the parish-house with people, fellowship and fun. It doesn't work. It has been tried in thousands of places, at great expense and with great toil, and so far as I know it hasn't worked anywhere. It ought not to work. God in his mercy won't let it work, because the whole principle is wrong from the start.

For what we all need, most fundamentally, is not fun and fellowship with one another, but that *fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*, of which St. John speaks.

"Fellowship" is a word which I have come to dislike, and to avoid using as much as I can, because in present-day American religious idiom it has become a bromide. This is our fault, not the word's. But there is a better term to describe the true life and nature of the Church, and that

is the *Family of God*. This is a New Testament term which has not yet suffered the fate of becoming banal through misuse and over-use. It remains, therefore, for us to consider our parish life in terms of its fulfilling, or its failure to fulfil, this august reality of the Family of God in which we are children of our Father, and hence brothers and sisters of one another.

We all know, as a matter of basic theology, that at our baptism God makes us his own children by adoption and grace. There our life in Christ begins. Nothing more important than our baptism can ever possibly happen to us. But we who were baptized in infancy find it very difficult to keep in mind the momentous implications for all our being and doing of this act of God which took place in the pre-history of our memory. Therefore it is essential that we frequently refresh our memory of what God then did for us, by reading and meditating upon the Office of Holy Baptism. What did God do? He made us living members of Christ, and of all who are likewise in Christ. So we are, henceforth and forever, members of Christ and members one of another. That is the key factor about our parish. It is the little local unit of the Family of God in which God has placed us, and it consists of some people who are members of Christ and of one another. Anything and everything else about the people in our parish is so entirely secondary to this fact that it is hardly worth mentioning.

Our liturgical experts today are hammering home to our minds the nature of Holy Baptism as an event of major concern to the whole parish family. We should never administer Holy Baptism as a private or semi-private affair. This sacrament should be administered in the presence of

the whole congregation, because it is emphatically the concern of the whole congregation when a person is made a member of Christ, and of them in Christ.

God continues in Confirmation what he begins in Baptism. The confirmed persons in our parish are those who, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, have been advanced to adult status and adult responsibility in the Family of God. They are God's grown-up children; and God gives to his grown-up children the privileges and the responsibilities proper to maturity. It is essential that you see your own Confirmation, and your fellow parishioner's, in this light.

The center of all our family life in Christ, and not simply of our formal corporate worship, is the Eucharist. Now, the Holy Communion is very much more than a fellowship-meal with one another. Let me say that first, lest anyone should think that I am commending a reduced and sentimentalized view of this holy mystery. The altar is our trysting-place with our heavenly Lord. Here we meet him face to face, as truly as his first disciples met him face to face in the glory of his resurrection. Here we receive him, in his true Body and Blood and Life, and when we have received him, he is in us and we in him in the most absolute and complete sense. The Eucharist is our fellowship-meal with one another only as it is, first and last, our partaking together of the one Life of our one Lord. But it is also *par excellence* our fellowship-meal with one another; and the truth of this is well expressed by J. B. Phillips in these words:

"All meals have a fellowship value: we know people better when they have come to tea with us, for example. The man of the world who says to his friends, 'Come and have a drink with me,' is obeying a deep human instinct for the

sacramental, however crudely we may think he expresses it. But this particular fellowship [of the Holy Communion] is naturally of a deeper and more important kind. We must not for a moment belittle the value of ordinary human social intercourse, whether it be held in connection with the Church or not. But here Christ himself is inviting us to experience and enjoy normal human fellowship at a much deeper level. Together we are satisfying a common spiritual need; together we are rededicating our lives to the service of Christ with all that that may imply. Together we are making use of this Christ-appointed contact and opportunity. The fellowship may not express itself in a hearty back-slapping way, but it should surely be expressed in a renewed sense of family solidarity. We are meeting together at one of the deepest levels open to us as human beings.

"Holy Communion is surely always falling short of its true purpose if it fails to produce some sense of solidarity with our fellow worshippers. It must never be regarded as a luxury for the devout; high and mysterious though it is, it is also the ordained place of deepest fellowship for those who are committed to the Way of Christ, ordinary, faulty, and imperfect though they are." ¹⁴

Any conscientious Churchman knows how easy it is to feel intensely his solidarity with all who are in Christ with him at the moment of Communion, but to lose this feeling soon after leaving the church or even before the service is over. We confess with shame that this happens to us very often, and we wonder what we can do about it. What we want is something that will help us on the "follow-through" of the Eucharistic unity with one another in Christ. Of course, the only thing that can make this possible for us is the grace of God. This grace is supplied to us in abundant measure, but

we fail to use it. This is our real trouble and our whole trouble. It is as if this mighty grace which is given to us were so quiet and so unobtrusive that we fail to see that it is right there with us. Any device which helps us to see, to feel, to experience this grace, to persevere in unity, is good; and for this reason such a device as a communion breakfast is good. I daresay that in most parishes we have such a breakfast only once or twice a year, and that for only some special group—say, the men and boys of the parish on Advent Sunday. This can and should be changed. Undoubtedly, one of the big reasons for the growing popularity of the weekly Family Eucharist in parishes throughout the Church is that the service is usually followed by a breakfast, at which our fellowship established at the altar is “kept alive” over the toast and coffee. It seems to work as an effective remembrancer of that unifying grace which otherwise we so easily forget.

I suggest that we try to fix clearly in our minds the nature of the Church as a unique society, because this is something which we highly organized Americans easily overlook, to our great spiritual cost. A good Christian citizen among us may say, quite truthfully: “I belong to a number of societies—the Masons, the Rotary, the Episcopal Church, and the Country Club.” In this indiscriminate way of thinking about the several things to which we belong we may recognize that they are of varying importance and value, but we fail to recognize that the Church as a society is different in kind from the other societies. The distinction lies in the fact that there are two kinds of society, the contractual and the organic. You join a contractual society; you are born into an organic society. People get together

to form a contractual society, such as a country club or a fraternal order or even a nation. We do not form an organic society; rather, it forms us. The family is an organic society, and so is the Church. You do not choose your parents, your sisters and your cousins and your aunts. Moreover, you cannot contract out of your family. Forever and forever you are the child of your parents and not somebody else, not the child of some more ideal parents whom you might choose. You are born into your family and you belong to it forever. This is obvious enough in the case of the family; but it is equally true of the Church, whether we see it so or not. God made you his child in this holy family at your baptism. This you can never cease to be. You may try to walk out; you may renounce your membership, or neglect it, or dishonor it. You may become a bad Christian. But still you belong to this family in exactly the same way that you remain the offspring of your parents. You join your club at your own choice, and if it doesn't suit your pleasure you can leave it in the complete sense—you can totally cease to belong to it. Your Church or your family you cannot leave; you can only betray it.

Carry the analogy between Church and family a bit further. If there is something wrong in your family, your just and reasonable reaction is to say that you must do everything you can to set it right. The family has the obvious right to expect this of you, because it is your family by the changeless decree of God, who gives you birth and being through this family and none other. The Great Church as *the whole family in heaven and earth*—and through its little neighborhood unit, your parish—makes upon you the same sacred, tender, inviolable and eternal claim. You and your fellow parishioners, with all the com-

pany of heaven, are those whom God hath joined together. Let no man put you asunder.

Your life in the Church is not a matter of esthetic rapture or moral uplift or the satisfaction of your gregarious instinct in the company of charming and stimulating people. It is a matter of salvation. We must be saved from something to something. That *from* which we need to be saved is that estrangement from God and his family which is living death and hell begun. That *to* which we need to be saved is that "union of men with God" which is "the union of men with one another"—a life of self-giving love which is in a real sense a dying life, but in an even more real sense is heaven begun. And I end with the assertion with which I began: that this mighty salvation is offered to you through the Church in your neighborhood, the Church right where you are. There, and only there, can it be received.

ALBERT T. MOLLEGEN:

Our Life in the Community ☞ 6.

There is no possibility of being a Christian without at the same time being an *American* Christian or a *Chinese* Christian or a *Swedish* Christian, as the case may be. Inevitably we are members of a particular nation and, within that nation, of a particular community.

It is precisely *in* the community that our Christianity is to be lived. Christianity knows nothing of a religious belief or practice devoid of consequences for "our town." In short, the Christian is a *citizen*. Critical of the city and of its culture he may be called by God to be. But the Christian loves the city and is zealous for its welfare.

Our lasting citizenship is in heaven, where the Christian ultimately belongs, and it is from heaven that he derives both his standards and his strength. Meanwhile, however, the Christian has a sort of dual citizenship. His name is written not only in the Book of Life but also upon the most recent census rolls.

The relationship between religion and politics, between heaven and Stickville, is the subject of the following chapter.

—EDITOR

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Our Life in the Community

The Church, the immediate local community as it both includes, and stands over against, the Church, and that wider community, the nation—these three realities, in all their interactions, will be concerns of this discussion. Inevitably, what will be said in "Our Life in the Nation and the World," the study that follows, will condition the thinking we do now. For our nation's responsibility in international relationships in this age of nuclear power and outer-space exploration must take precedence over, and partially shape, all of our domestic relations and policies.

THE CHURCH

A good place at which to make our beginning is, perhaps, with our consciousness as it awakens within the Church. If we were baptized as infants and "grew up" in the Church, or if, on the occasion of encountering the Church from the outside, we came into its life as adults, it is still true that we are surprised, sometimes frightened, and always awed at what it is that we have "gotten into." Bishop Bayne, you will remember, tells the story of the young man who had just been confirmed and heard a sermon on the Church as a great historical community including the saints, and as the bearer of a rich and great heritage which sets us in our time in absolute responsibility to the living God. "Bishop," the young man said, "I never knew how big a deal this Church was!" So it is with all of us.

Christian living within the Church is continually dis-

covering "how big a deal" the Church is. We awake as one whose individual life is set within the great processional of the people of God reaching backward to the beginning of biblical history and moving forward with God's guidance and power to the final *consummation* of God's purpose. We are an old folk, we people of God, at least as old as Abraham, "ten thousand times ten thousand" of us pouring up through the ages toward the final reign of our Lord when all tears shall be wiped away and sin and death will be no more.

Nothing is more important in our time than that the Churchman see himself and his parish congregation as a part of the people of God, mighty in the Lord, indestructible and invincible inasmuch as we share in the everlasting and victorious life which God has shared with us in giving us his Incarnate Son. Two aspects of our worship constitute us as this people of God, remembering and partaking of the real presence of Christ. These central aspects of our worship come to sharpest focus in the Eucharist. *Do this in remembrance of me*—remembrance. "Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood . . . that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us"—partaking of Christ.

First, remembering. The Greek word used in the New Testament is *anamnesis*, and it has become an Anglicized liturgical word. It and the Hebrew words that lie back of it speak of an act of recalling, remembering, recollecting, "making memorial of," which is of the very essence of biblical religion and comes to its fullness and climax in the *anamnesis* of Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God who gives his life for, and to, us.

Anamnesis is a component part of human relationships

and, perhaps, it is better to understand it in purely human terms first. When, for instance, your husband comes home for dinner after a day's work in the city, you are able to pick up with him exactly where you left off after breakfast. So also is he with you. This could not be done without *anamnesis*, although both of you do it without self-consciousness, or even awareness of it. The man with whom you have dinner at home, you recognize in the dimension of a host of memories. Usually you remember the original, significant meeting, the occasion when romantic love began to appear or, at least, became a possibility. "This man whom I now meet is that man whom I met then. This is he who courted me, with whom I took the solemn vows of holy matrimony. This is he by whose side I have met the vicissitudes of domestic life with all of its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows." Without this dimension of recalling, two strangers would meet, not husband and wife with the binding ties of a life lived together. *Amnesia*, the absence of memory, would mean that everything begins all over again. *Anamnesis* means continuity, the possibility of increasingly deepening bonds of commonality and love. So it is with the meeting of the people of God with God in worship. They recognize him. *And a stranger will they not follow but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.* (John 10:5) We meet God, recognize him, respond to him, receive his communication of life to us because he comes to us as the God who has made himself known in a history of self-disclosures among our people. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of Moses and Joshua; of David and Nathan; of Elijah and Elisha, Amos and Hosea; Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah; Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. But most important of all he is the God who

was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself (II Cor. 5:19). He is the God whom the saints have adored and served and of whom the great theologians have spoken and written. We know him. We are a community who calls up into our living meeting with God the self-disclosures by which he has made himself known.

But remembering is only one side of the center of our worship. The presence of God himself is the quintessence of our worship, for Christian worship is response to, and participation in, the communicated life of God in Christ Jesus. Christian worship focuses in, and derives from, the Eucharistic worship in which the Body of Christ which is the Church (including our bodies) is the Body of the risen Lord; and the Body and Blood which are the consecrated loaf and wine become one living Body by which we receive the divine Life. *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* (John 6:53) This truth of Christ's real presence must, of course, always be protected against simple materialism or magic in the same way St. John protected it, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth* (giveth life); *the flesh* (that is, by itself) *profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* (John 6:63)

To know the divine Presence is to know judgment. Judgment produces in us repentance, and repentance enables us to receive the divine forgiveness. So in our worship, the prelude to participation in God's communicated Word (at Matins and Evensong) or in his communicated incarnate Word (the Eucharist) is a General Confession and Absolution. And because we are restored to partaking of the divine Life, we are a community of thanksgiving, of rejoicing. *Eucharist* means thanksgiving. Our gift of selves,

individually and in our togetherness, as one body to God is an action of thankful response. We give ourselves to him, who gives himself to us in Christ. Only encouraged by participation in Christ, only in union with his perfect offering of himself to God for us, could we so give ourselves to God. And, finally, since this is the life of God himself of which we partake, we confront every human predicament, every historical situation with the absolute certainty of our participation in God's final victory. The great joy of the Christian community is the joy of the Messianic Banquet, the Victory Feast. *If God be for us, who can be against us?* (Romans 8:31)

The Church, we have said, is the people of God constituted as such by God's self-revealing action and the people's response. At the center of the Church's life is the real presence of Christ in the dimension of our *anamnesis*. We know judgment, are sincerely repentant, and receive forgiveness; but, above all, with singing gratitude we partake of Christ and his offering to God of himself in service—service to God and to men, the men for whom Christ died. This is the Church in which our lives have been set by the incredible and magnificent action of God himself. It is indeed a "big deal" that we have been begotten into, an "awe-full" community. From within it, we look outward at our immediate community and our nation which both includes us (the Church) and stands over against us. The Church is *in*, but not *of*, the world.

At this point—I do not mean to be taken too seriously about the chronology of our awaking—there comes a rude shock. We awake in the great ongoing life of the people of God, but we awake in the Anglican stream of that people and there are other streams which are set over against us

to one degree or another. How are we Anglicans related to those other segments of the people of God? Here Bishop Bayne is supremely right; there arises in us a sense of our tragic divisions as Christian bodies. Let us be clear, it is not simply the unbelievable variety of American Christianity that shocks us. That could be mutually enriching. It is the conflicting character of the streams which hurts us. Yearning for the unity of the Body of Christ, for visible unity with wholeness of our heritage and wholeness of our togetherness, inevitably arises. (Organic unity does not, of course, mean rigid uniformity.) In brief, we are thrust by the very nature of our worship into some kind of participation in the ecumenical movement. This is both a delight and an agony, and often a delight through agony and an agony through delight. It is a delight to discover how great the unity already is; it is delight to find new gifts from our Lord coming to us through the witness of others whom we had not understood; it is delight through agony to find that part of the conflict lies in our own sinful partiality that has to be purged away. But it is also agony; agony that listens and yet seems unable to hear, that struggles to communicate and seems unable to speak clearly; agony that finds that new alliances create new conflicts with other alliances. Yet this is the Christian situation, this is the people of God into which God has set us. Christians, partaking in the life of our Lord, can do no other than accept it, work with penitence and patience in the midst of it, sacrificing nothing that we regard as essential yet testing all that we so hold for its essentiality. To live so with, and against, our divisions will give our life a rhythm. The shock of differences little understood drives us deeper into the roots of our own church life where new riches appear. And the depth of our

church life, Christ himself, takes us outward again into the ecumenical movement and forum. All through our land this oscillation is going on within the life of the churches.

THE COMMUNITY AND THE NATION

The immediate community in which we live as Churchmen is in deep need. One does not have to enumerate the signs of its sickness and disintegration. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions a Christian can make is honest realism about his community and national life. This is not easy. I have, for instance, seen young seminarians become quite glib in speaking theologically of "the fallen world" and its need for redemption, and yet moralistically to be shocked when an honest Christian business man or statesman describes some of the things which seem to be necessary to stay in business in a competitive economy, or in power in a democratic society.

This immediate community, however, is the one into which our Lord has called us. We must take up our Christian task here—however difficult it is and however trivial some of the first steps may seem. Our first task, of course, is to witness in our community to our Lord, to become the occasion, if we may, for his drawing others into his Body, the Church. It is not that the Church has a missionary aspect. It is that the Church is the sacramental expression of Christ's mission.

Part of this witness is our life of responsible service to our community. Here all that can be said in so short a time is that a sensitive conscience and some degree of imagination will see more to be done than can be done. Often the tasks may appear to be too un-earthshaking. Bishop Bayne writes, with approval, of a congregation filling out gaps in

a local library's offering of books. But such action can have some of the quality of our Lord's washing of the disciples' feet. Nothing that needs doing is too trivial to become a real symbol of Christian service. Anything that draws people together in community, that gives them togetherness by partaking in a common human good or task, the Christian is concerned to promote. For it yet remains to be demonstrated that any kind of human community can survive, or reestablish itself, in the disintegrating powers of the industrial revolution. The mechanization of life, its accelerating pace, and the mobility of our population are fragmenting human community. Human individuals become increasingly like atoms unrelated except externally and mechanically. T. S. Eliot chose the modern cocktail party as the setting for, and the title of, one of his Christian plays. Viewed sociologically (and completely apart from the problem of temperance), it can be seen as a symbol of the mechanization of human society. Persons meet and say little or nothing, and what is said is often half-finished and half-heard. Human beings ricochet from collision to collision like billiard balls tapped aimlessly by an infant. It is to be remembered, of course, that in Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, the lack of real community (love) and the fact of false community (unreal romantic love) was discerned and dealt with redemptively so that real community is present on the eve of the second party which will benefit from its presence.

Community, human communion, comes of persons partaking of a common good: beauty, or a task of helping the indigent, or wholesome play (recreation is re-creation). I know one parish which often has an art exhibit for local artists. A movable exhibit has traveled from parish to par-

ish, reaching thus more artists and appreciators. Such things may seem unimportant in a nuclear power age, but they need not be. They can be part of the battle for restoring and maintaining man's humanity in community. The Church ought to know better than any other group that human community comes only when persons partake of a common thing beyond themselves. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (participation) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* (I Cor. 10:16)

Because we Christians have the most powerful uniting reality—our Lord himself, we should be able to discern and make available the human goods which unite and uplift men. We do this, of course, because God commands us to love. But this command is not strange to his creation. Christianity never understands God's love—manifest in Christ and his Church—as alien to the nature of creation. On the contrary, it is the answer to the real and deepest needs of men. God's love in action and real understanding of human needs can be correlated in a community by Christians' insights and consciences. Bishop Bayne uses the story of the Good Samaritan as an illustration of this. Those who were too busy, who undoubtedly had many important duties, passed by the man in distress on the Jericho road. The Samaritan met this man's needs; neighborliness sprang up between them. Correlating the love for our fellows which is engendered in us, with real human needs so that community arises and our Lord is witnessed unto—this is the business of the Christian. It may be done in part through the social agencies of one's community and through many other associations. I know parishes which are almost the only resources in their area for families in distress. The

parish can call into action lawyers, physicians, psychiatrists, business men, financial advisors, or whoever is needed to meet a family's needs with skill and relevance.

In another area there is a religious drama vogue. Parishes have drama groups, exchange plays and make them available to other parishes and the general community. Even when the result is something less than a success, the effort is the occasion for human sharing, cooperative work and service.

Of far greater importance than his participation in such community-nurturing projects as these is the Christian's participation in the political life of his society. The local and the national community have a political structure, the state, which orders and holds our common life together as a skeleton does our physical bodies. Political structure and government are at one and the same time the instruments of cooperative action for the people, and the agencies by which a community deals with its recalcitrants. A Christian by the very nature of his relation to God and people becomes responsibly involved in the political order. If some of the activities I have suggested are difficult, political activity is even more difficult. The average Christian and the average citizen have neglected their political responsibilities too long. We have not participated to the degree we should have, and we have not considered full time political vocations for ourselves and our children with sufficient seriousness. On the whole, too many of us have taken a "hands off the dirty business" attitude. Yet if we believe in the Incarnation of the Son of God, we believe that God leads us into responsible participation in politics according as our special vocations condition that participation. As St. Augustine observed in his lifetime, if Christians do not

wield power, others will. In a way, the Christian knows that none of us are good, or wise, enough to wield power over and for our fellows. But this knowledge is one of our greatest contributions to society, other abilities being present. We should, as St. Augustine saw, accept the political task, with full awareness of its difficulties and of our disabilities, because on the whole it is better for Christians so to do than for non-Christians. "Christians" and "non-Christians" in St. Augustine's day were more sharply delineated in regard to political ends and goals than in our society today. While the Christian obligation to act in the political order today is the same, the Christian will find many non-Churchmen, men of other faiths, religious or humanist, who stand alongside of him in the continual struggle for maintaining and furthering social justice. We rejoice in this fact and gladly work beside them.

There are real Christian benefits which come to us when we take up full political responsibility. No one, I think, understands human sin, in oneself as well as in others, so profoundly as one who participates in politics. What we do as political groups is often so far below the moral level of our individual actions. Reinhold Niebuhr wrote a book about this discrepancy and called it *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. The struggle of massive groups of men for dominance over other groups or for "a place in the sun" for themselves is always a struggle expressive of that selfishness which Christianity calls "original sin." "Original sin" means "basic and universally present sin." Politics is an arena in which we may learn the reality in human existence which is described by the myth of the fall of man. There is sin in all of our movements toward, and achievements of, order and justice. It is engrained in the structures and cultural

momentum of our society. To understand this is to have a new appreciation of God's greatness, his holiness and the mightiness of his redemptive action in, through, and by, our Lord. For a Christian, to live in political responsibility is to live in continual dependence upon God for the maintenance of his integrity and his hope. Cynicism, despair, and defeatism are the constant temptations which come of political action. No human effort can be a greater occasion for a deeper relationship with God than the assumption of political responsibility. Worship, especially eucharistic worship, as well as our private devotions, take on a new dimension when, alongside of others, we begin to try to straighten this "bent world" of ours.

To say that a Christian by the very nature of his faith must take up political responsibility is not to say that he gets from God, the Bible, or the Church specifically Christian programs. It is of the essence of Christianity that we should be driven into responsible action for social justice. But it is also of the essence of Christianity that social justice as we see it and the methods by which it is to be achieved are not to be equated with justice as God sees it and strives for it. The complexity of political analyses, of assessments of powers, possibilities, and probable results is such as to impress upon our Christian consciousness our fallibility. Even more than our consciousness of fallibility, however, is our awareness of our sin. We know that we do not completely transcend the outlook and interests of our culture, our nation, our section of the nation, our economic class and, indeed, our skin-color group. Because God gives us the humility to know that we are not God but fallible and sinful men, we are absolutely commanded to do the right as we see it and yet to realize that other Christians and

good men may stand against us in sincerity, integrity, and good faith. There are times when I think that this humility is the greatest contribution which Christianity makes to political life.

It is the terrifying idolatry of Communism which makes this Christian virtue of humility stand out as so valuable today. For Communism perfectly exemplifies the sin of self-deification which appears everywhere to one degree or another in political conflict. Communism is self-righteousness in regard to the totality of social and historical existence. It deifies itself and satanizes its foes. Christians, however, often know that the conflicts in which they are engaged are, in part, the conflicts of sinful and fallible Christians *with sinful and fallible Christians*. As long as there are two major political parties in the United States, there will probably be profound Christians in each of them to the great health both of the parties and of our country.

In the late 1930's it fell my lot to teach a course in Christian social ethics to young candidates for the ministry who were very idealistic and utopian. Under the influence of Stanley Jones' book, *Christ's Alternative to Communism*, they set up a so-called Christian program not only against Communism but against all non-Communist programs, economic and political. They sought to start a completely new world. I asked them to stand, figuratively speaking, in the center of Memorial Bridge in Washington, D. C., between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington Hall, the residence of Robert E. Lee. They were to reflect from that vantage point on the fact that if they were the occasion for God's producing in their congregations Christian statesmen of the calibre of Lee and Lincoln, they might feel well used by God. Yet Lee and Lincoln fought each other in a tragic

civil war. That is a way to illustrate our fallibility, our sin and our participation in the tragic "fallenness" of our world. To act with all the powers of our being for the right as we see the right and yet not to deify our cause—perhaps this is the hardest of Christian assignments.

Yet if we work at this Christian political task, we may have hopes which no others may have. We may pray with St. Augustine a prayer uttered on his death bed when the barbarians were laying siege to his see city, Hippo. The Roman Empire was expiring. The barbarians had taken it, crossed the Mediterranean and were storming Roman outposts such as Hippo. St. Augustine prayed for God to deliver his city from its enemies. So also we in our time pray for the deliverance of our *civis*, Western civilization. And while it may not be true that "to work is to pray," it is certainly true that to pray truly is to work. So, on one level, we Christians shall labor to save our civilization by nurturing and furthering the quality of human community which participates in the divine life and in all the creational good things which he gives his beloved creatures.

But St. Augustine and all Christians know that God does not always give us what we desire. On a second level we pray with St. Augustine at Hippo, "that he give us strength to bear his will," if not the deliverance of our civilization. This, we remember, was God's answer to Augustine. For Roman civilization as such perished, but the community of Christians survived as a people of God, the only people with fellowship, ultimate hope, and the courage to labor toward a new civilization. The Church not only baptized the barbarians, but it civilized them with the cultural goods which it saved from the classical culture that had collapsed. The result was the Christian Middle Ages.

And Christians can survive such major historical catastrophes as the fall of Rome and labor for a new future, if need be, because they live on a third level which is not that of the immediate civilization nor that of a future historical one, but that of the City of God itself, eternal and inviolable. St. Augustine prayed that he be received in "his bosom." To participate in the divine life is to be grounded in the Eternal One himself and to know no final defeat.

We Christians, therefore, live on three levels. Because we are citizens of the City of God, inviolable, eternal and certainly victorious, we can also live, if we must, for a city in history beyond the perishing of this immediate city. But this does not mean that we abandon our present city prematurely. We let God decide whether today's city shall be replaced by tomorrow's because, for us, all earthly cities are loved because they are manifestations of the City of God, our true "native land." And that "native land," "the bosom of the Father" cannot be gainsaid us. *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.* (Hebrews 13:14)

J. V. LANGMEAD CASSERLEY:

*Our Life in the Nation
and the World* 7.

The thought of this book has moved progressively from the self to the family and to the parish church in which this family finds itself a member of a still larger entity, The Family of God, and then to the town or city in which the parish is situated, and at length to the nation of which this civic community is a part. Rare indeed—and unfortunate indeed—is the Man without a Country!

To belong to a country, however, is also to belong to the world. Inescapably, nationality plummets us—whether we welcome it or not—into international relations and international responsibilities. What then, for the Christian, is the meaning of patriotism? What shall be his relation to politics? To civil liberties? To the United Nations? To the World?
—EDITOR

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Our Life in the Nation and the World

How are spiritual men to comport themselves in a secular world? No answer to this urgent question can be forthcoming or claim any validity unless it concerns itself with three distinct but connected realities which dominate contemporary history. First, the characteristic political form of modern society, the *nation-state*, existing in a world of not unsimilar nation-states which together with them constitutes a community of states jointly occupying the entire world. Second, our own democratic conception of the supreme social value which it is the task of political institutions and instruments to realize for us, insofar as such things can be realized and enjoyed in this fallen sinful world of ours. This value Bishop Bayne—rightly in my judgment—takes to be *liberty*. Third, that characteristic political emotion of modern times which supplies, in seasons of crisis, the most important kind of political motivation—*patriotism*.

Each of these things brings with it its own peculiar dangers, problems, and perplexities. It is possible that we may misconceive and misuse our political forms and institutions in such a way as to turn them into absolutes, mortal gods, inhibiting all further political change and, instead of functioning as the instruments by means of which we achieve our values, allow them to conceive of themselves and to behave as though they were themselves the very embodiments of the values we seek. Again, we may so misconceive our social values as to waste our energy and substance in the pursuit of unattainable vanities and illusions, rather than

true and substantial values deep seated in our human being. Lastly, our political emotions may become so corrupt, so insensitive to changing reality, such irrelevant, automatic reflexes of tired spirits, that we may ourselves approve of and support self-idolizing institutions and their vain pursuit of invalid purposes.

In this essay I purpose to concentrate on the dangers, moral as well as political, inherent in our institutions rather than on their positive values, advantages, and achievements. It is not that I am doubtful of their values, advantages, and achievements—very much to the contrary indeed—but simply because most of us are already highly conscious of them, and there is no lack of people only too anxious and ready to remind us of them on every possible occasion. The truth is that in a democracy *demos* is king, and although he is a very different kind of king, yet like absolute, semi-divine monarchs of ancient days he is likely to be surrounded by the flatterers and sycophants fawning upon power, who are in every age the characteristic corrupters of kings. We have abolished courts perhaps, but not courtiers, and they are not lacking who would slowly destroy us by feeding our complacency and self-esteem, by luring us into a shallow optimism which slowly unfits us to face the realities and emergencies of real history.

The Christian and the Christian Church are certainly not called upon to do or say anything which will increase complacency or minister to pride. We live in a world in which the pressure of events is terrible and dangerous; and the greatest danger of all is that we ourselves may lack the spiritual resources and maturity to rise to the height demanded by the occasion and respond creatively to the challenge of the times. Now, as always, in Christianity there

is no chance *of* mere survival and no hope *in* mere survival. We can only survive in so far as we can transcend ourselves and become something we have never been before. For nations as for persons, the only real alternative to ultimate physical and historical death is the spiritual death which contains within itself the germ of resurrection to a new life. In Christianity the risen life which we find in Christ is never the old life indefinitely prolonged; rather, it is the old life so completely transformed beyond all recognition that it is perhaps better to think and speak of it as an entirely new life. In their own way, the same thing is true of nations and human history: we must be prepared to change utterly if we are to survive. Whatever exists in human history is subject to the law of death. In history it is our resilience and readiness to change utterly, when the challenge of circumstances requires it, that brings with it the promise and possibility of life. But all this is only possible if, and when, we are not too satisfied and complacent about what we are already.

Now let us consider each of our three themes.

THE NATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The nation and the international community are correlative terms. We cannot properly have the one without the other. The two conceptions inevitably imply each other, like the left hand and the right hand, or the north and the south. (Could we possibly have a world in which all the men were husbands and none of the women were wives?) Even so a world of nations is inevitably an international community. To say this is obvious. Yet in a sense it is also somewhat unrealistic, for in historical fact the nation is a far more

organized and integrated institution than the community of nations. Indeed, even given an institution like the United Nations, the community of nations still enjoys no more than a kind of peripheral existence on the edge of the existence of the nations. The international community seems to most of us no more than a kind of remote appendage to the immediate and substantial fact of the national existence. It is not a reality of corresponding importance and power. We can even sit down and discuss whether it is a good thing to belong to the United Nations, as though membership in the community of nations were in some sense optional, and speaking in merely constitutional and legal terms, I suppose it is. Compare with this the obvious fact that none of us would dream of sitting down and discussing whether it is a good thing to belong to the nation-state or not. There, we should all agree, we have no possible option. Here is our first dilemma. From the point of view of philosophy and ethics, when we are trying to think out the matter in some mood of cool deliberation, it is quite obvious that nation and international community are twin realities, and that we could not conceivably have one without the other. But in actual practice it would appear that we *can* have one without the other; indeed, that in some sense we have got one without the other, or at least, we have the one elevated to such a degree of historical importance and the other in so minimal a form, that they cannot be regarded as equal and comparable realities. This means that our political and institutional actualities and forms are out of touch and line with right reason, eternal justice, and eternal truth. What we can see clearly to be true in the nature of things, and therefore in the will of God, is certainly far from true in actual historical fact. Where there is this kind of disparity between

the nature of things and the will of God on the one hand, and the actual condition of things on the other, we are always in danger of judgment and disaster. This kind of disparity is the kind of thing that wants looking into very carefully.

The cause of the trouble is the comparatively modern idea of sovereignty. The nation-state is sovereign; the international community is not. Sovereignty means complete internal autonomy. The sovereign is conceived as one who is a law unto himself, *legibus solutus*, absolute in relation to all law as the old writers say. The first sovereigns in the modern sense were the absolute monarchs of the renaissance period who had overthrown all their rivals, both the power of the medieval church and the power of the medieval barons, and could at last declare that what they willed had the force of law. When we come to the later rise of modern democracy, the fatal error was that the concept of sovereignty was not repudiated but simply transferred from the king to the people. The nation-state was still sovereign, only now it had a different sovereign. Otherwise there was no real change in the theory. Thus our present conception of the international community is little more than that of a number of sovereign nations coming together to transact such mutual business as they are willing and able to conduct. This state of affairs would be foolish and unrealistic at any time, but at the present time when the nations are so inextricably intermixed (when, as Bishop Bayne quaintly says, the world is now a smaller place than the State of Massachusetts a hundred years ago), it is not only foolish but threatens to be utterly disastrous.

There is, of course, an important Christian criticism of any idea of sovereignty at all. According to the way of

thinking dictated to us by our Christian faith and commitment, God is the only real sovereign. We should conceive of human communities, whether national or international, not in terms of sovereignty at all but in terms of the rule of law, the nations under the law, the international community under the law. This, I agree, is more easily said than done; for who, we may ask, is to declare what is the law which is to rule the community? Surely he who declares what the law is, is in fact the sovereign. This is a difficult question into which we cannot go at present. Suffice it to say that the main Christian tradition is that the roots of law are not to be found in the actual decisions of law-makers, but in a kind of law, usually called "natural," rooted in the very nature of things as God has made them, and that actual or positive law should always be subordinate to this natural law and should use it as its mentor and guide.

During recent centuries our civilization has moved very far away from anything like this old Christian view; but there are at least some signs that it may return to it, no doubt in some new and revised form. Meanwhile there are some people who propose that we should seek to solve our present dilemma by gradually transferring sovereignty from the nation-states to the United Nations—so that the latter would evolve into a kind of world-state. Certainly such a development seems very far off at present, although under the increasing pressure of terrible events, and possibilities even more terrible, something of the kind may indeed come about. Not that this would necessarily solve our problem. The sovereign world-state might well turn out to be as bad as the sovereign nation-state, perhaps even worse. We have so far no particular reason to venerate the United Nations. Many of its decisions have proved grave errors, and it seems

to be a theatre of maneuvers and manipulations quite as corrupt as that of any national parliamentary assembly. We must indeed support the United Nations, but we must not support it uncritically.

As Christians we must always try to have the courage to be utterly realistic and to face life without illusions. The idealistic developments to which we pin our hopes for the future again and again in life turn out to be just as sinful as the things they replace. Probably this will always be so as long as time and history continue. We must never make the mistake of supposing that utopia is round the corner if only mankind can be persuaded to adopt some particular policy about which we happen to be enthusiastic. The Kingdom of God is always at hand—because God purposes and will surely establish his Kingdom. But utopia is never round the corner—because only men purpose utopias; and they purpose so many other things at the same time, some good, some bad, which are entirely incompatible with any man-made utopia.

Nevertheless, we may say of the international community—somewhat clumsily represented today by the United Nations—at least one thing which no Christian can ever say of the nation-state. (The nation-state, as we now know it, is a surprisingly new institution—not more than about five hundred years old—and during most of its historical career Christianity has functioned in a world in which no sovereign nation-states existed. There was no such thing, for example, in our Lord's time, nor for more than the first thousand years of Christian history.) The international community is simply our way of describing the human race, considered as one indivisible whole, as it appears in the age of the nation-state. For the Bible and for Christianity, the indissoluble

unity of the human race, obscured but not destroyed by the curse of Babel, has always been a reality of primary importance. In the New Testament, indeed, Jesus Christ is presented as the clue to the restoration of the shattered unity of the human race. We who are many become one man in Christ Jesus. For the same reason, the Church of Jesus Christ is inevitably a universal or catholic church, recognizing none of those differences between human beings to which human beings themselves attribute such vast and fallacious importance.

Thus, the international community, although differently conceived at different epochs, is a concept that has permanent validity for Christian thought. By contrast the nation-state is something that Christians must treat seriously only for so long as it endures, which may, of course, be either a relatively long or a relatively short time, but certainly cannot be regarded as either permanent or eternal. In other words, Christianity and Christian thought could manage, have in fact managed, without the nation-state. But Christianity always and necessarily includes a solemn declaration about the underlying unity and total solidarity of mankind. Sin may have obscured it, but God has established it; and we know that whatsoever he does he does forever. In Christian thought we must necessarily give more weight to the international community than to the nation-state, lay more emphasis upon the thing that endures than upon the thing that once was not and some day shall not be.

More than this can be said. In his church life the Christian has access to an experience which provides him with a kind of clue or analogy to the problems and dilemmas of national and international existence. We all belong to particular parishes and congregations; we love them and strive

to serve them with loyalty and enthusiasm. Yet we know that parishes and congregations are no more than parts of a much wider and greater whole. We must not mistake St. Ethelburga's or Holy Trinity for the whole Church of God. In the first place, they belong to a larger fellowship called a diocese. We may only be loyal to our parish in so far as that loyalty is part of and wholly compatible with, indeed positively enjoined by, our wider loyalty to the whole diocese. But again, the diocese is much less than the whole Church of God. The diocese, after all, is only a part of the larger self-governing church of the province or nation, in our case the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. We can only be loyal to our diocese in so far as that loyalty in no way clashes with, but positively fulfils, the will and intention of that wider reality. But again, the Episcopal Church is one self-governing part of a great international, intercontinental fellowship and unity of churches, the Anglican Communion. We can only be loyal to the Episcopal Church with a loyalty which is governed by and obedient to our wider loyalty to the Anglican Communion as a whole. Again, the Anglican Communion is not the whole of Christendom. It does not even think of itself as the whole of Christendom. When an Anglican Bishop ordains he does not ordain Anglican ministers, but priests and deacons in the Church of God. There are ordained ministers of Christ who are Anglicans, but there are no Anglican ministers. In the Anglican Communion we want nothing of our own. We do not want creeds and doctrines of our own, and in the same way we do not desire a ministry of our own. We wish to inherit nothing but the whole inheritance of Christ's universal Church. In the present unhappily divided state of Christendom that universal Church

seems hardly to exist, just as the international community seems hardly to exist in the present divided state of the world. Nevertheless, it does exist, and shall be made manifest in the ultimate manifestation of the deep purposes of God, so that even now our deepest loyalties are given to it. We yearn in hope towards what we only see in faith, and what we see in faith is the human embodiment of absolute, universal, triumphant love.

LIBERTY AS THE SUPREME SOCIAL VALUE

Our modern democracy is cradled in the American and French Revolutions. The American Revolution has given democracy more in the way of substance and stability, but undeniably the French have done more of its most widely known and valued thinking. The great mistake of French Revolutionary thought, as it seems to me, was the equation of liberty and equality—as though these two things invariably and necessarily belong together. But the fact was that this was very far from being the case; and the result, almost from the beginning, was that the forces of democracy were inwardly split between people who valued liberty more highly than equality and others who valued equality more highly than liberty. Of course, the equalitarians always wanted as much liberty as is compatible with equality, and the libertarians always wanted as much equality as is compatible with liberty, but the extremes were very far from meeting. We think of the totalitarians of our own age as completely outside the traditions and tensions of democratic thought. This is not altogether true. Our totalitarians are the ruthlessly logical equalitarians who have abolished liberty in order to impose equality. How terrible is their mistake is revealed by the fact that whereas they have indeed suc-

ceeded in abolishing liberty, they have necessarily failed to impose equality. For always in their structures there remains the stark fundamental inequality between those who impose equality and those upon whom it is imposed. From this Nemesis there can be no escape.

Am I saying then that only liberty really matters and that equality is a kind of pernicious illusion? That is very far from my intention. I do want to point out, however, one very fundamental difference between liberty and equality. Briefly, liberty is a social and secular value, whereas equality is a spiritual and religious value. We have liberty in the world, where our liberty reflects the world's recognition of the kind of being that each of us enjoys because God has made us what we are—beings endowed with a measure of freedom and self-regulation. What God has given and ordained let not man take away. But we have no liberty, properly speaking, *before* God or over *against* God. On the contrary, we only find and possess the liberty proper to the human condition under God. His service, as we are often reminded, is the perfect freedom. Thus our liberty is essentially a liberty in the world, a liberty before and over against each other, not a liberty before or over against God. Our liberty involves the social recognition of the fact that each of us transcends society, that one human being does not exist for the sake of other human beings, rather each human being exists for the sake of God and God alone. In the last resort, man is a spiritual or metaphysical animal, not a social animal. This is why we say truly that the social order was made for man and not man for the social order. Equality, on the other hand, is essentially an equality which men have before God: they are all equally, because infinitely, beloved of God. Any attempt to translate this truth

into social or terrestrial terms inevitably fails. Certainly men share a common nature with Christ and with each other, but each one has his particular and peculiar existence (the technical term for this in Christian theology is *personality*). And it is far truer to say that all men are different than to declare that at bottom they are all the same. They differ in every possible way—in ability and aptitudes, in vocation and achievement, in social value and moral worth. For this reason earthly society is inevitably a structured hierarchy; the human race is never a mere mass or crowd of human beings, but always some kind of fellowship or association of utterly different people joined and working together in accordance with the rules of some articulated social scheme. Phrases like “equality before the law” or “equality of opportunity” have very severe limitations and must never be pressed too far. Certainly there is no equality of natural endowment. Equality is always a religious or theological truth, never a social or secular truth. Now we can see why we misconceive the basic idea behind democracy and corrupt our democratic practice whenever we value the idea of equality more highly than liberty. Liberty in the state and equality in the Church! That might well be our basic slogan.

This is the issue underlying the widespread criticism of our educational system which followed so swiftly on the irruption of “Sputnik.” The educational system has long prided itself on providing a preparation for equalitarian society. Has it consequently been unjust to outstanding ability? Has it in consequence failed to educate for leadership, perhaps even forgotten how sorely democracy requires leadership and the devoted service of people with outstanding gifts in every department of life? Are we about to

witness the resurrection of the "egghead" and his restoration to his properly respected place in the social order? How much sin lurks behind the passionate demand for equality at all costs? Is the small man's lack of humility plainly revealed in his resentful inability to respect and value the talents of his more gifted brothers? I will not seek to answer these questions. To ask them is sufficient to illustrate my point. A merely equalitarian democracy must always be in danger both from within and from without: from within, because she may estrange and frustrate her most gifted sons; from without, because she may fall behind her enemies and competitors in the quest for intellectual and cultural values.

I conclude that if we ourselves are true to the deepest truths in our democracy, we think of it and define it in terms of liberty rather than in terms of equality. Those of us who are Christians as well as democrats will insist that we have a profound religious and theological sanction for our taking this course.

PATRIOTISM

In political and social affairs the basic motive, as elsewhere in human life, is always some form of love. That is why we must always take every possible care that the ordered structure should be kept sane and valid. Disordered ways of life almost always proceed from disordered systems of love. Either we love small things inordinately, so that the love of the greater things is put into the shade, or we perversely love things that ought not to be loved. Or, we love so selfishly and unintelligently that the beloved is endangered and embarrassed by the very zeal of our affections. The patriotic love of the homeland is an excellent thing, but it

must not be allowed to become the greatest love of our lives; and we must take particular care to keep it intelligent and confined within bounds so that it will not seek inordinate goals which may well destroy its object. No doubt Hitler truly loved Germany, but he nevertheless came very close to destroying it altogether.

What is patriotism? I suppose the conventional definition would be love of one's country. But this is hardly altogether true except where the country happens to be a very small one. Perhaps natural and spontaneous patriotism is more often regional than national. The two most obvious themes and objects of human loyalty and love are the particular region, on the one hand, and the whole world and community of mankind, on the other. We may describe the love of the familiar locality as our response to the call of *place*, and our love of the whole world as the cradle of the human race, as our response to the call of *kind*. The modern nation-state falls somewhere between these two. It is wider than the region and narrower than the world. For this reason the state has been forced in the past to use propagandist and educational techniques on a large scale in order to foster in people the love of itself. It has invented symbols like flags and anthems, devised and taught new ways of interpreting and even narrating history. Thus, for example, history is commonly taught as the history of nations—despite the fact that throughout most of recorded history there have not been any nations. Such histories bring before us warring tribes and remind us that out of these people there later came what we know as England or France. The reader somehow gets the impression that the warring tribes knew that one day they were going to be

England or France, whereas in fact they never even dreamed of such eventualities. Arnold Toynbee tells the story of a French historian who entitled the first chapter of his history of France "France before the Ice Age." Needless to say, there was no France before the ice age, yet the very phrase perpetuated and expressed some national myth of eternal France. Whether or not we can truly say, "There will always be an England" or "always be a France"—which I think doubtful—we certainly cannot say that there always *have* been these things. The suggestion of eternal England or eternal France is part of the characteristic propaganda of the nation-state.

But there are other factors beside education and propaganda which have enabled the nation-state to attract more and more to itself the kind of affection and loyalty which was once more appropriately given to the region, rather than to the country in the modern sense of the word. The first of these is the much higher degree of mobility within a country which in recent times has become one of the most striking of social changes. Many people nowadays can hardly be said to have any regional affiliations at all. They are more conscious of the country within which they move than of any of the parts of it *to* which they move in such rapid and bewildering succession.

Again, with the spread of education and a more self-conscious and sophisticated form of culture, people acquire a not altogether unnatural dread of being, and even more of being thought, "provincial." The region becomes the speciality of the sentimentalist, the poet perhaps, or the increasingly popular regional novelist; but the broadminded realist is content with nothing smaller than the nation. He

cannot go back from there to the region. The question is whether he can move forward from there to something broader still.

So long as the nation-state exists, it is *our* form of the state, and we owe it that allegiance and obedience which in Scripture and Christianity is always owing to the state as such. The nation-state cannot be regarded as permanent—and our duty to it cannot conceivably include trying to give it an artificial permanence when the time comes for history to move on to some other form of political organization—but while it lasts we must take our duties to it and under it seriously. It exists uneasily as a kind of middle term between realities more real and permanent than itself. Our task is to find some kind of continuity in these things, to begin with the region where affection and loyalty are most naturally born, to expand and broaden this affection and loyalty in the wider life of the nation, and finally to fulfil it in the total life of mankind. But this continuous process of growth will only be possible if the claims of region, nation, and mankind are kept harmonious and compatible with each other. Above all, the nation must neither oppress the life of the region, on the one hand, nor set itself up as a finality excluding any wider loyalty to mankind, on the other. In the long run we must recognize that the whole world is our true *patria*. We begin with the love of the part, but this partial love grows gradually, and man grows with it, into the love of the whole.

THEODORE O. WEDEL:

Our Reason for Being ≈ 8.

From the love of the part to the love of the whole. This, as we learned from the last chapter, is growth.

If the narrow circle of self must be widened to include the larger circles of family, parish, town, nation, and the community of nations, then the question arises for those who are Episcopalians: What, in this series of ever larger concentric circles, is the particular place, role, and function of the peculiar people who call themselves Episcopalians?

Do we have a *raison d'être*, a reason for being? Is there anything—any task, any function—for which we (through no merit of our own) are especially, perhaps even uniquely, fitted?

What, if anything, is assigned to us as our particular task in relation to other Christian bodies? And what is our assignment with respect to those who know not Christ? What “this Church of ours” actually is, can easily be described. But there is a deeper question: *Why* this Church? It is here, right enough. But has it any right to stay?

—EDITOR

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Our Reason for Being

If you were asked to give an answer to the question "What is the Church?"—at least the Episcopal Church—I imagine many of you could now give miniature lectures of your own. But the question, "What is the Church?", can lead over into another question which in some respects is more difficult. We need to ask not merely, "What is the Church?" but, "Why is the Church? what is our reason for being?" To give an answer to such questions may seem at first an easy assignment. We are a group of people who have been privileged to hear the Gospel. We have been baptized. We have come into a fellowship of worship and faith, and we trust that even in our daily life we are showing forth at least something of the fruits of this great inheritance. We have new motivations for obeying the moral law, and we are, in some sense, able to call ourselves Christians. We are those who are saved out of the world into the congregation of Christ's flock. We are the Body of Christ. We are the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

All those answers, as far as they go, are right. We are privileged to enjoy our marvelous heritage of the good news of the Gospel, of being repentant and forgiven sinners, of being gathered out of the world to enjoy a communion with our Father in heaven, a foretaste of what may come to us at the great consummation at the end of the world. And yet, having given such answers, can we stop there?

Recently I ran across an illustration, in the form of a comment on a familiar text in the Bible, which points up

the fact that there is a problem still involved with respect to our *raison d'être*. Our Lord told his disciples that they were the salt of the earth. Now salt is gathered out of the ground or may come out of the saltiness of the ocean. We are accustomed to see it in neat form inside a saltcellar. This being gathered and put into a saltcellar is the first thing that has to happen to salt to make it useful to anybody. A temptation, however, might lie ahead. Suppose that salt became self-conscious and that the various grains of salt could talk to one another; and suppose that they found contentment in remaining within the saltcellar. "What a wonderful saltcellar this is! What wonderful salt crystals we are to have been gathered out of the ocean and out of the depth of the earth, and to be able to enjoy this communion that we have with one another!" But—as we all know—if salt remained within the saltcellar, it would not fulfil its reason for being. Salt, after being gathered in a saltcellar, has to be scattered again.

The analogy may well apply to the Church. We are those who have been gathered out of all peoples and nations into the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. But if we now remain there, if we think that the Church exists for itself, as a saltcellar might think that it exists for itself, we would be apostate to the Gospel. For the moment we realize what our Lord meant by coming into this world and dying for us, we also realize at once that, of course, we are not the only ones for whom he died. We have always before us the great text, "God so loved," not merely us—not merely the nice Christians of America, not merely us Episcopalians—"God so loved the *world* that he gave his only begotten Son" for our salvation. He loves the Russians as much as he does us. He loves the Egyptians as much as he does us. He certainly

died for them as well as for us. If we are tempted to think that our Christian heritage, even the marvels of living under the Gospel, are now our possessions, and that we are permitted to live a protected and sheltered existence, separated from the world, as a saltcellar might lead its own life, we are not fulfilling our reason for being. We are neglecting what after all is the final and ultimate command of our Lord himself to his disciples—the mission of the Church. The closing verses of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew are awesome words: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.*

The temptation of the Church, particularly in times of peace, is to rest content with itself, to make itself its own end, and to be, if we can use one of our modern psychological terms, an introverted Church, instead of an *extroverted* Church. It is tempted to forget that its real reason for being is to be Christ's "mission" in the world, the witnessing body, witnessing to a Gospel which belongs to the whole world. In a certain sense, we have no right to enjoy this Gospel, nor even right to hear it, unless we realize that we are meant to spread that Gospel to the ends of the earth. My children and yours have really no right to be brought up in a marvelous parish house with its Sunday school, unless we realize that we are responsible, at the same time, for a child in Japan, and for a child in India who may never as yet have heard that Gospel. The Gospel is for them quite as much as it is for us.

I have employed the analogy of the saltcellar to point up our obligation to be missionaries and witnesses to the

Gospel to the ends of the earth. Here is another analogy. I warn you that it is going to contain a little exaggeration, and that when I am through, I shall add a few footnotes to soften it down a bit. But sometimes one can learn a useful truth by way of exaggeration and paradox.

Imagine a lifesaving station on a rocky coast line. Its reason for being is, of course, lifesaving. In the course of its history lifesaving boats have gone out in many a storm and have brought in many shipwrecked sailors. And this well-performed function has filled it with a good deal of pride; it takes pride in its own history. As a matter of fact, in the little lifesaving station are shelves of biographies of former lifesavers, and the continuing group takes pride in looking back at what one might call the great apostolic era of lifesaving that this station has had in its past. In its earliest days it did not pay very much attention to the lifesaving station itself. The lifesaving crew was so busy with seeing that its boats were in good repair and ready for the stormy deep, and that the lifesavers were properly equipped to fulfil their great function, that the lifesaving station itself remained rather shabby. But there came a time—perhaps in a lull in storms—when they began to wake up to the fact that the lifesaving station was a bit neglected. They said, “Why shouldn’t we do something to the lifesaving station itself? Is it not perfectly proper that lifesavers have a good place to live, where they can renew their strength, so that when the storms come they will be ready for them? Is it quite right that the great lifesavers of the past should have such a shabby library in which their biographies are kept?” Gradually attention began to be diverted from sending boats out into the deep, or from keeping the boats in repair, to furbishing the lifesaving

station itself. Indeed, some people who were not ready to be lifesavers as such, but who had a certain admiration for such noble work, began to join a sort of honorary lifesavers club, and to interest themselves in beautifying the life-saving station. They began to put an extra little turret on a corner here, and a second turret on a corner there. The beds in which the lifesavers were to sleep began to get beautiful counterpanes. A lifesaving Woman's Auxiliary got busy weaving lace for the bedspreads. And inasmuch as the lifesavers needed good food, and, of course, food was also needed for shipwrecked sailors when they were rescued, a wonderful doughnut industry got going. The coffee urns were being polished more and more. Indeed, the lifesaving station began to take on grandeur. It was a wonderful life-saving station. And inasmuch as everybody knew that the real *raison d'être* of the lifesaving station was, of course, still lifesaving, those serving it developed a kind of liturgical boat. It was not a real boat, but just a liturgical boat, where the honorary lifesavers went through the motions of life-saving, so that they could wear beautiful uniforms along with the lifesavers proper and take pride in serving the great lifesaving vocation. All well and good. But this attention to the lifesaving station began to lessen the attention to lifesaving itself. In fact, the lifesaving vocation was gradually turned over to volunteers and to specialists. Difficulties really loomed large, however, when there were storms along the coast, and when the few volunteers who were still willing to go out into the storms actually did bring back some shipwrecked sailors. The lifesaving club had come to be so *nice*, consisting of such wonderful people, cultured and living now together in their beautiful clubhouse, with its beautiful kitchen and its beautiful dormitory,

that when a group of shipwrecked people, dirty and salt-encrusted, arrived—black and yellow, as well as white—the lifesaving club began to be thoroughly embarrassed. “How can we dirty our beautiful beds? They have become so beautiful that we ought not to let people in who have not been washed. We shall have to work out entrance requirements, so that we can teach newcomers some proper etiquette, and put nice clothes on them before we can let them enter.” So embarrassed was this particular lifesaving station when some of these shipwrecked people came in, that they finally solved the problem by giving them a little lecture, saying, “We know you are very grateful for having had your lives saved, and we know that you would like to help with lifesaving yourselves, but won’t you please build your own lifesaving station somewhere down the coast?”

I realize that my parable needs footnotes. Surely, the Church is justified in building a beautiful lifesaving station. As a matter of fact, the Church is not only a lifesaving station, it is also a tower set on a hill. It is a candle which is supposed to light the darkness. I myself think that splendid churches and great cathedrals can be witnesses to the Gospel. They can be lifesaving stations and fulfil lifesaving functions. And yet, if we take seriously the grain of truth which may lie in our little parable, would not we all admit that we *are* tempted to live to ourselves and that the great missionary task of the Church can easily be forgotten? We can limit our attention to manicuring our *own* morals, and to beautifying our *own* worship, to buying better and better kneelers so that we can repent a little more comfortably, forgetting that the Gospel which is supposed to bring people to repentance belongs not to us alone but to the whole world.

Since I seem to be toying with analogies, I am going to try one more—one which may further alert us to the missionary vocation of the Church. Indeed, a good many of our missionary theologians today are saying that if we want to define the Church, we ought to define it simply in the phrase, “The Church is the mission.” It is Christ’s continuing life on earth. It is fulfilling the vocation that he fulfilled. He wandered up and down and had no place to lay his head. We Christians usually have very comfortable places to lay our heads.

Here is the other analogy. Imagine a family which has owned an estate for generations. You can think of the great squirearchies of Great Britain, or of the families which have owned estates in some of the older parts of our own country, and handed them down from generation to generation, developing something of a clan spirit. Ours is a very good family. In fact, one might describe it idealistically—a very good family which practises *noblesse oblige*, which is hospitable to strangers, giving very generously to community causes and to any appeal for help and need and sympathy in its environment. It happens, however, that a messenger comes from the capital of the state in which this particular family is located and says, “We have some rather sad news for you. We have been going through the title deeds in the registry office, and we have discovered that you do not own this land. You thought you did, but you have been living on public domain. This estate belongs to the entire commonwealth. Now, we are not going to dispossess you, since you are here doing a good job. But from now on you are going to be merely custodians of this estate. You can no longer take pride in your generosity, because your

generosity is now going to be transformed into distributing what actually belongs to every citizen anyway!"

Is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ public domain? The Gospel does not belong to us. It belongs to the little child born in darkest Africa as much as it does to me. The good news that Jesus Christ died for us, that we can receive forgiveness of our sins, that our guilt can be taken away, that we can enter the new life in Christ—that good news is not our possession. We may be custodians of it. We ought to come together as salt must come together in saltcellars, in order to discover what this Gospel is, in order to enjoy it to the point where we can witness to its glory. We are not denied the exaltation of worship experiences. But if our worship should end at the church door, if we think that all this is meant for us alone, then our reason for being has not been thought through.

Thus far this has been a homily on the missionary vocation of the whole Christian Church. It is important and imperative that this be spelled out in detail as to where and how our particular Church is called to do its missionary work. I am not, however, going to give you the details on this topic. We can read these in our books readily enough—and it is required reading for every Episcopalian! I would remark only that I sometimes think that our Episcopal Church in America is a little handicapped in having its missionary task somewhat on the fringes of the great battles that are going on between Christianity and alien religions. We have no missionary work in India or in Moslem lands. It just so happens that our vocation has called us to areas nearer home. I shall venture, therefore, to say just a word about the ecumenical view of missions, which can enlarge our horizon.

The moment we look at the missionary task of the Christian Church today around the world, we see that we are entering upon a gigantic battle of religions. We have become, so far as communication across geographical borders is concerned, pretty nearly one world. In this one world now we are going to confront one another by a conflict between great revived religions. In earlier generations Christianity could think of itself as penetrating foreign lands. We still use the phrase "foreign missions." These lands are ceasing to be very foreign. They are next door to us now, so far as conquered distance is concerned. And in these lands, ancient religions are reviving in strength. Buddhism is on the march. Hinduism is on the march. So, also, is the great world of Islam, which is much in our minds now as we read of the crisis in the Middle East. Christianity has scarcely made any inroads into Islam. And yet here is almost a third of the modern world dominated by a militant, alien religion.

Talk about "the problem of Christian missions"! We are going to face a gigantic battle in the next few generations. I sometimes think that the whole of the Christian Church ought soon to go on a war-footing. We may soon be called upon to ration ourselves. We may have to ration ourselves with regard even to some of the luxuries we enjoy in our own Church life. Our substance will be needed for the missionary task on a sacrificial scale which did not seem called for (or so we thought) in the more peaceful centuries immediately preceding us.

The moment one looks at the missionary task of Christianity against this large background, one fact, of course, immediately looms large. Christianity labors under the great handicap of disunity. It is not by accident that in so far as unity movements have appeared in recent history they have

arisen first in mission lands. It takes but a moment to see how the disunity of Christendom begins to be almost absurd when you confront the mission problem. India is an example. About two per cent of India is Christian. The Christian Church has been planted in a village here or in a city there—planted by missionaries who come from the divided Christianity of America and of Europe. We have our hundreds of separate denominations. Each one is sending its missionaries to certain portions of the globe. That is all well and good. But do you think that a little village in India, where there is a tiny Christian fellowship, could afford even ten denominations? I am thinking now of the ten largest in America. Do you think that every little village now being Christianized all over Africa and Asia could afford to set up an Episcopal Church on one corner, a Methodist Church on a second corner, and a Presbyterian Church on a third corner, so that the people who are Christians there can make their own choice as to what denomination they want to belong to? Here in our land this is our customary way of handling the diversity of church allegiances. It becomes impossible in the mission field. We may visualize a person who has been baptized and confirmed in the Anglican Church in a certain province of India. He moves to another section of India where there is no Episcopal Church, and never has been one, where there is only a Methodist mission. Must he remain the rest of his life outside a Christian fellowship? Should he become a Methodist? Or a Methodist, if he moves over to another area, must he become an Episcopalian? I merely need to allude to a few of such concrete problems to give a vision of what a scandal, on the mission fields at least, the disunity of Christianity is. The cry, consequently, comes to us from

mission lands, "Please, you Christians in the homelands, please become one, so that the Christian witness won't be scattered and lost, particularly when we are really fighting the great battle of our time against its rivals." Christians clearly ought to become one. There ought to be only one great, united Church of Christ. But, alas, we have hundreds of years of divided history behind us, and the problem of uniting the Churches is not going to be easy.

Can the Episcopal Church—or the embracing Anglican Communion—participate helpfully in the unity movements of our time? In some ways there is no Church in Christendom more concerned about reunion than we are. We can take pride in having furnished many of the leaders of what is called the ecumenical movement. We have already learned how to combine in one fellowship people of various theological convictions and of diverse liturgical practices. We are "high-church" and "low-church," and somehow or other have not murdered one another during four hundred years. We have discovered that the unity of the Prayer Book is the kind of unity that allows for a great deal of diversity in everything except the essentials. The only confession we are asked to make is set forth in the two great historic creeds (the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed). We are not divided, as are many of our Protestant brethren, into confessional sects. We enjoy even now, so we feel, a little foretaste of what Church unity can be. And yet, when our Protestant sister communions look at us, we strike them as very, very queer. In fact, the Lambeth fathers, at the last great conference of bishops in London, tried to define the Anglican Communion. It took them two long paragraphs, and they end up with the sentence: "There is nothing else like it in Christendom." Yes, we are queer. We

are a combination of a catholic tradition and the tradition of the Protestant Reformation. When Protestants look at us, they frequently think we are Catholics. When the Roman Church looks at us, it thinks of us as Protestants. But, here we are—a queer thing, but rather wonderful, nevertheless.

We may, in the ecumenical movement, have to remain a queer thing a bit longer, because I am certain that we have to witness to one aspect of unity for which we are custodians. We must witness to the unity of the Church in time as well as space. If we are ever going to have a fully united Church, it surely must take into itself our fathers in the faith, as well as the Christians who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord in our present scene. The Anglican Communion, with its liturgical heritage going back to the earliest centuries of the Christian Church, and with its ministry, its apostolic succession as we call it—tracing the laying on of hands of the shepherds of the flock back to apostolic days—possesses a depth dimension, which can be a symbol of the communion of saints throughout time. Our fathers in the faith belong to the Church as well as those who confess Jesus Christ today. Somehow or other, we have bridged in part even the Reformation break. We feel a link with the Church before the Reformation as well as with the Church after the Reformation. I sometimes think that some of my Lutheran brethren, who make so much of the Reformation, have hardly ever heard of a Christian before Luther—with the possible exception of St. Paul! That is an exaggeration, of course—but there is a little truth in it. In the ecumenical movement, we may be called to bring into the Coming Great Church which may appear in Christian history, not merely those Christians who may be worshipping by the Prayer Book now, but the

communion of saints of the ages. The prayers which we treasure come out of a long Christian past. They are prayers which come with the overtones of having been said by millions and millions of our Christian brethren before us. The Anglican Communion thus is under compulsion to be a witness to the Church of history. Yet, at the same time, I hope and pray that our pride in our own tradition will not stop us from taking full part in the great ecumenical meetings and conversations of our time. To refer once more to the mission lands, eventually we must have a united army which can confront the gigantic world of communism, on the one hand, and the gigantic world of revived ancient religions which are emerging out of Asia, on the other hand. Unless the Christian Church becomes fully the missionary Church, the witnessing Church, the Church on a war-footing, with rationing possibly necessary at home, I do not know what the future of the world may be. That future may depend on the extent to which the Christian Church will fulfil its meaning under God, going out into the entire world "baptizing the nations, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Notes ୧୨

- 1 Richard Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, III, X, 8.
- 2 C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1947) p. 84. Used with the permission of the publisher.
- 3 Augustine, *Epistle of John*, Homily VII, 8.
- 4 "Comment" by John Wild in Wilber G. Katz, *Natural Law and Human Nature* (New York: The National Council, n.d.), p. 23. For another treatment of this same topic the reader is referred to Dr. Krumm's *Why I Am an Episcopalian* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1957), pp. 95-110.
- 5 Michael de la Bedoyere, *The Layman in the Church* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1955), p. 37.
- 6 T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1932), p. 380.
- 7 de la Bedoyere, *The Layman in the Church*, p. 35.
- 8 Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Fundamental Moral Attitudes* (New York: Longmans Green, 1950).
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 11 Simone Weil, *Waiting for God* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1951), p. 97. Used with the permission of the publisher.
- 12 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, translated from the Sixth Edition by Edwin C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 33. Used with the permission of the publisher.
- 13 Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (London: The Centenary Press, n.d.), p. 9. Used with the permission of the publisher.
- 14 J. B. Phillips, *Appointment with God* (New York: Macmillan, 1956), pp. 27-28. Used with the permission of the publisher.

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